

# Antipolitika

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## ANTI-MILITARISM



We do not have classics or founders whose portraits we hang from the walls, those made out of bricks, or mental ones, all the same. We tear down the walls, and we avoid idolatry like the plague.

Bakunin and comrades did not found the anarchist movement, nor did they synthesize its principals in pure intellectual contemplation. On the contrary, the anarchist movement grew out of the wing of the International Workers Association (also known as the First International) which consisted of proletarians who didn't even call themselves anarchists in the beginning. Bakunin did not join the International as an anarchist, he became one influenced by the practice and vision that was already being done and developed by those proletarians.

These people, at the beginning of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century already had a strong vision of the possibility of a new world based on solidarity and mutual aid. In that vision, the International was a revolutionary organization, but also an embryo of a new society within the shell of the old world, it was simultaneously organized and imagined as a global network that was supposed to organize and coordinate the whole of social and communal life—a kind of an anti-state.

This indicates to us that anarchist thought came to be as a reflection of practice. But, in order for our movement to breathe freely and truly be alive, it is necessary for practice and analysis to always reflect one another, forever changing, in continuous movement.

Those whose vision didn't go beyond the idea of "socialist" parties that seize state power, did not understand this movement: for them, it was "apolitical" because of its indifference towards the participation in parliamentary politics. But, in reality, something completely different was the case.

As we refuse the legitimacy of the state, as an institution which with violence secures the existence of an exploitative system, so do we refuse "politics" as a separated sphere of life, one dealt with by specialists. We are interested in life, and in order for us to live and breathe freely, the sphere of the political needs to be dismantled—same as with the state/capital/patriarchy.

Anti-politics is life without walls and fences, it is our heart, and the new world we carry inside it.

*People who talk about revolution and class struggle without referring explicitly to everyday life, without understanding what is subversive about love and what is positive in the refusal of constraints, such people have corpses in their mouths.*

Raoul Vaneigem

*Fight to maintain this feeling for organization and do not allow it to be destroyed by those who think that anarchism is a doctrine which has nothing to do with real life. Anarchism is the opposite of sectarianism and dogma. It perfects itself in action.*

Nestor Makhno, addressing B. Durruti and F. Ascaso

*The anarchists are not promising anything to anyone.*

Maria Nikiforova

*I shit on all the revolutionary vanguards of this planet.*

Subcomandante Marcos

## The militarization of everyday life

We live in a highly militarized world. It is never really a question for the state and capital if that is necessary, it is just matter of level. How much militarization? The Balkans were always heavily militarized, even periods of "peace" were marked by a strong military presence in everyday life, and speaking from the territory which was once called Yugoslavia, and now carries a few different names, it is clear that militarist mythology and general militarization always prepares society for new wars, and never serves to preserve "peace", as those in power like to assure us.

The history of recent wars teaches us many things: it shows, once again, the real face of state and capital, which becomes that of the beast, as soon as masks fall down and open war is on. In those times, there is no need for sophisticated marketing tricks, the spreading of fear and destruction is sufficient. War has its logic and that logic is already deeply rooted in the society, as it was preparing for a new slaughter for years. It is enough to say: "a new enemy is here and they are the real threat to your life, tradition, and above all, to national interests"! How many times have we heard that already?

The new "enemy" is always there, being nations/ethnic groups or migrants, who are the new "big threat". But it does not stop there. The enemy is not always the one that comes from outside, one that is "invading", since that does not help to justify the militarization that aims to "protect" society from the inside. Internal enemies are all of those who engage in social struggles, participate in protests or other means of everyday resistance in this war of low intensity that the state and capital wage against us all.

Cameras on every corner, closely monitoring all everyday activities, looking for those who disobey, looking for those who do not fit into frames and cages that the state created for us. Monitoring routine, learning how to impose more control, just as in some perverted lab experiment. Human animals in a huge social experiment.

With cameras they monitor and try to establish an atmosphere of self-policing, but with the constant presence

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Contact:

[antipolitika@riseup.net](mailto:antipolitika@riseup.net)

Each issue of this journal will have two versions one English and the other in Serbo-Croat.

FRONT COVER IMAGE: Drafted soldier Vladimir Živković deserted from the Vukovar front line and parked armored vehicle in front of the Federal parliament in Belgrade (200 km away from Vukovar) as a protest against the war. (September 1991)

BACK COVER IMAGE: Flames of February 2014 social uprising in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina.





of the police and other para-military units on the streets, they show their force, they create the situation in which armed forces are always present on the streets and ready to intervene. This, of course, differs from place to place, and the level is not always the same, but the general trend is that the police is becoming more militarized, while at the same time, the army is being trained more and more to do police work. They are preparing for the escalation of internal and external conflicts, which are created by their own masters.

There are many examples of this: since the so-called “migrant crisis” started, the army was deployed to the borders, which “normally” happens only in the case of war. Border control is supposed to be an internal state issue, one that the police deals with. But rapidly the state has changed the role of the army and started using it for internal control as well, which is one step away from a military coup. Of course, this served as good grounds to push militarization further, putting in question (in Croatia at least) whether the suspension of obligatory military service should be maintained. So, the state is once again considering to enlarge its military force and include a big part of the society in its army machine, by preparing them to be soldiers. This process is not just a question of “learning how to use weapons”, but much more, since the largest part of military training consists of

teaching soldiers how to obey orders and do what they are told to do without asking any questions or ever questioning authority. This creates not only soldiers, but also citizens, who are obedient cogs in the capitalist machine, whether in war or peace.

We must not forget the new razor-wire fences that were built on the borders, as a clear sign (practical and metaphorical) of militarist normality shifted onto a higher level, making these barriers acceptable as an everyday sight, which had been protested against before, but now remain as something that is there to stay, as one more step of accepting the reduction of our freedom to move. We are all being trained to accept this new normality and now when it is there, it is not being questioned any more. This is what military “training” does, even if you are not part of the army.

In the past two years (2014 and 2015), Belgrade and Zagreb had, for the first time after almost two decades, big military parades. One was celebrating the liberation of Belgrade from Nazi occupation in 1944, the other was celebrating victory in the recent war (1991-1995) in Croatia. Both events, no matter how different they were in terms of what they were celebrating, had the same political aim: to show the current strength of the state and its military apparatus, to show off in front of allies and to create a moment of nationalist euphoria and pride for “our military”

and “our glorious nation”. Both events were based on the idea that a military parade is something that can bring people together, strengthen the position of the state and reassure all of the state subjects and its enemies that it is prepared for all options. If we would call it a different name (or its real name to be more precise), these events were not a parade, but an open threat.

For the post-Yugoslav territory, which was aiming to demilitarize to some extent, this is a clear message of how the state and capital can never survive without its means of destruction, or how they prefer to call it, means of “defence”.

To this we need to add the “protests” of war veterans in Croatia, a demobilized military force, mostly retired, who are “drafted in” whenever there is a need to create an informal threat and situations of insecurity, which only the politics of the “strong hand” can solve. A minority of the war veteran population was literally camping in the center of Zagreb, blocking traffic on occasions or threatening to detonate gas-containers as a part of a right-wing electoral campaign (not formally connected, of course). They had no real demands, just general slogans and a demand for the “dignity of war veterans and the Homeland war”. This might sound like a joke, but this is the

official name of the war people in Croatia lived through. Repeated so many times, the joke from a magazine in 1991 became the official name of the war, no matter that it was initially a joke about Stalin’s Great Homeland war and the use of this name as a means of war propaganda to motivate people to participate in the war efforts of the state. Simplified versions of the history and ignorance are the best fuel for patriotism.

Of course, what happens in the Balkans is not isolated; the heavily militarized situation in the rest of Europe, military presence in public places, airports, train and bus stations, etc, are just part of the same strategy that is showing what kind of future the state and capital are predicting and preparing for us. The system that exploits us all protects its own existence and keeps itself healthy with militarism and wars, to paraphrase an old quote.

This is why we feel that we need to deal with militarism and all of its aspects, trying to come up with an anarchist/anti-authoritarian analysis and organize an anti-militarist struggle that needs to be a part of the struggle against the state and capitalism, since they heavily rely on the brutal force of its violent institutions.✊





# Anarchist solidarity and anti-war initiatives in post-Yugoslav countries

A few important notes: I am writing from my own personal perspective, meaning that I lived at the time in Croatia and that all of this is my point of view. I will note if something is a quote or reference.

Also, it's important to note that this is not a historical text. There's no such thing as objective history. This is a personal overview of activities and events that were organized to oppose war, nationalism, militarization and to show and practice solidarity with all those suffering directly from war or its (side)effects.

Most of all, this is not an analysis of the war(s) in former Yugoslavia, neither an attempt to discover why they happened. It was never really a question – as any war in the past it was all about power, wealth and control over territory and people, no matter which side in the war you look at.

For a better understanding of the context in which the events that I'm writing about take place, it is important to note that in the years before the war(s) in former Yugoslavia there was no anarchist movement, just few individuals and initial groups being formed at the very end of 1980's and the beginning of the 1990's. So, the time of war(s) was also a new beginning (after almost 60 years) for organized resistance coming from anarchists.

Still, anti-militarist resistance was not new; it was present for years, the 1980's were the time of broad campaigns against the militarization of society and obligatory military service that every man older than 18 had to do for 12 months in Yugoslavia. In that time, terms like “conscientious

objector” were new, at least in public discourse and in the media, people were put in prison, demonstrations were taking place, newspapers that would stand behind the arrested were banned... For the first time, the position of the army was put into question on a wide and open scale. Most importantly, this campaign was coming from an anti-militarist and pacifist position and not from a nationalist one, which will be the case in years to follow, since the Yugoslav national army (JNA – Jugoslavenska narodna armija) was opposed at the beginning of the 1990's also from a so called “anti-war” position while at the same time new national armies were built with support from these so called “anti-war” protests that were mostly motivated by the new rise of nationalism.

Of course, this nationalist opposition in Croatia to JNA was nothing but pure “performance”, as it was manipulated by new rising political elites so as to create a situation in which one army is the enemy and the other army is “ours”. All this started as an attempt by mothers to get their sons out of the JNA, since it was clear in the Spring of 1991 that war would start and some claim (and I have no reason not to believe them) that this initiative was without the influence of political elites, but just a pure grass-root initiative by parents. Still, as soon as it started, it was clear to those in power in Croatia that they could use it for their political goals, so they started to provide free bus transport, help organize demonstrations in Brussels and distribute hundreds of new national flags to demonstrators. After few months, even if this movement was grass-roots, it turned

to nationalist rhetoric and lost any potential for calling itself anti-militarist or anti-war.

## Anarchist and other anti-war initiatives

At the same time, in late Spring of 1991, a new anarchist group was formed in Zagreb under the name (at the time) *Zagreb anarcho-pacifist organization* (ZAPO) and they organized the first anti-war and anti-militarist protest in front of parliament in Zagreb. This was something totally different in approach without any national flags (of course!) and with a clear message against the war politics which were loud and clear at the time from all sides. That was June 1991, just few weeks before the start of the war in Slovenia, and only two months before the start of the war in Croatia (although, random shooting and low-scale warfare were already going on without being called “war”).

ZAPO was mainly organized by young, subcultural people from Zagreb, and in first months of war, many of them went out of the country to avoid mobilization or military service so, soon after it was formed the group was reduced to only a few people. Still, this didn't mean the end of activities, but rather a slowing down and focusing



on immediate needs like helping people avoid mobilization, doing small-scale leafleting on the streets, and putting up anti-war and anti-nationalist posters. All this was small and symbolic in some sense, since full-scale war was going on, most of the country was under bombing or close to the front-line; military was everywhere on the streets and the media was only covering the war. The atmosphere of war was full and heavy, it became normality, as if there was nothing else but war. At least it seemed so.

I will not go further in explanation of general





atmosphere, since it would take too much space, but it's important to mention it for a better understanding of the conditions under which all these activities were going on. Also, the war didn't happen with same intensity all of the time and was not same intensity in all places, but the last four months of 1991 were heavy in most of the country. If nothing else, it was a totally new situation full of stress, fear, death and strong propaganda by nationalists. After some time, even the worst conditions become normalized; people would say "What to do? You have to live somehow." War was the new reality.

In July 1991, the Anti-war Campaign of Croatia was formed in Zagreb as a loose network of different organizations and individuals, ranging from anarchists to feminists to anti-nuclear activists, environmental groups, pacifists, human rights groups and more. It attempted to create stronger opposition to the normalized logic of war although it recognized that we live in war, it was important to establish something that would keep ideas of peace, anti-nationalism, and anti-militarization alive and present in public discourse and not to let everything be dominated by this new war normality. But not everything was left just on the symbolic level. Many groups and individuals were working on direct protection and solidarity with people who were victims of war, no matter which side made them victims or who they were. It was important work, since non-Croatians, mainly Serbs, would get in trouble just for having the wrong name.

One example of solidarity was helping people who were about to be evicted from their home because they were the "wrong" nationality. The scenario was often same - guys in camouflage uniforms come with some sort of paper saying that they have right to move into the flat. If the eviction isn't successful, they come back with cops and more armed people until it is.. All this was possible because of new regulations so the whole process was legal (at least during the four years of war). the only way to stop this was to attract as much attention as possible and try to prevent it with the presence of more people. Most of the time this wouldn't help; hundreds of people were evicted and whole families sent into the street. Still, solidarity actions kept some people in their homes.

In early 1992, ZAPO also joined the Anti-

war Campaign, meaning that it was listed as a network member. All groups that were part of the network organized all activities in full autonomy, coordinating only when they had the need (or want) to do so.

From the very beginning of the war, one of the main steps of those in power was informational blockade, meaning that no news from the "other side" was coming through. In practice, that meant that no news from Serbia, or SAO Krajina (part of Croatia that was under Serbian control) and later Bosnia and Hercegovina (BiH) could be found in any mainstream media. That was part of the effort to demonize other side, preventing any news that could show how suffering happens on all sides and, most importantly, that there was active resistance to war. For example, in Croatia you couldn't find any news about anti-war protests or the huge number of people escaping mobilization in Serbia. Friends from Serbia can write/say more about these events as I have no personal experience in them.

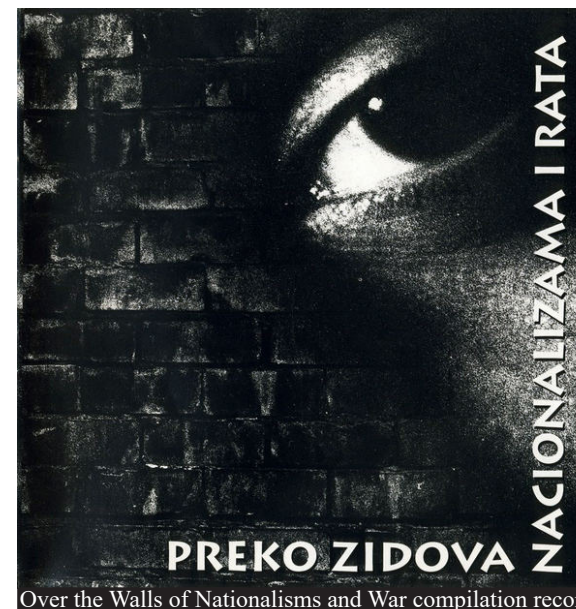
As short description about what kind of events I'm writing I'll use quote from book by Bojan Bilic "We Were Gasping for Air: (Post)-Yugoslav Anti-War Activism and Its Legacy" (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2012) :

(...) in June 1992, thousands of Belgrade citizens poured into the streets to protest against the siege and express solidarity with Sarajevans. They carried pieces of black paper which — once united — formed a kilometer long ribbon, a symbol of their condolence and compassion (...). A couple of years later, some of those who took part in this undertaking also traveled via Croatia and Hungary, crossed the Igman Mountain and walked through the Sarajevo Tunnel to enter the besieged city and bring to its people a message that many "on the other side" were against the senseless destruction.

The informational blockade wasn't formed from a lack of information in media alone, there were also no phone lines, no internet (it didn't really exist yet, at least not in sense that we know it today), and no direct postal service.

In response and as a solution to the information blockade and mainstream media propaganda, a few major initiatives were created as a means of

communication. In 1993, ZAPO participated with other anarchist groups from former Yugoslavia in the publication and distribution of a newspaper called *Over the Walls of Nationalisms and Wars* (Preko zidova nacionalizama i rata), which was printed in Italy (with financial support of anarchists there) and distributed in all former Yugoslav states wherever there were people willing to distribute it. It was spread on the streets in Croatia, in military barracks (among soldiers serving military service) and left in public spaces. Though a few thousand copies of newspaper couldn't do much, it was punch in the eye for local censors and nationalists as well as a strong voice of solidarity among people living on both sides of front-line who did not support war or the political power of any side. Texts that were published in the newspaper covered political views of people living on all "sides" concerning war, nationalism, and economy, but more importantly it was a joint effort of people from the "other side". By the time this project happened, "solidarity" was considered to be a dirty word and a "communist left-over" so any solidarity action was seen as an act of treason. And I guess it was, but there's nothing wrong with treason against those in power or against the state and its institutions. Still, no matter what anarchists thought, it was hugely problematic to start any solidarity initiatives, as most of the people in Croatia thought of themselves as victims of a war which was started by the "other side" and solidarity was not an option for most people. On the other hand, anarchists were talking about all



victims of war, no matter who they were. Most of the time, this was just too much for a lot of people in Croatia.

The idea around *Over the Walls of Nationalisms and Wars* was to publish it every now and then, depending on the money and initiative of different groups, but unfortunately, just one issue was published. At least on its own resources, since the second issue was published in 1995 as part of ZAPO's zine *Comunitas*. Still, it was done like that so as not to lose all material that was collected for it and the effect was not the same, of course.

Still, this was not the end of the idea around *Over the Walls of Nationalisms and Wars*: anarchist punk bands and d.i.y. music labels continued with a project of the same name through organizing tours together. Both tours happened in Slovenia (the only post-Yugoslav country for which there was no need for visas or it was easier to get one). The first tour was done in 1997 by bands called Bad Justice (Croatia) and Totalni promašaj (Serbia). In 1998, the same tour was done by the bands Radikalna promjena (Croatia) and Unutrašnji bunt (Serbia). These tours were open political events with a clear message rather than just another music tour. Two 7" records under the name *Over the Walls of Nationalisms and Wars* were put out





Posters "Arkzin cleans Croatia", few thousands pasted in Zagreb and elsewhere, 1995/1996

in those years, one as a split 7" of Bad Justice and Totalni promašaj, and other as compilation of bands from former Yugoslav countries. Still, this was not the only project coming from the d.i.y. scene; earlier, some time in the first months of 1994, a few people from Pula went through Hungary to Serbia (there was no direct way to get there, since you would have to cross front-lines) to make interviews with people from the underground (or not so underground) scene and compile it in a fanzine called *Distorzija* which included an audio-tape compilation named "No Border Compilation". This was a brave and good attempt of breaking lack of communication that existed at the time.

Just about the same time (1992) as *Over the Walls of Nationalisms and Wars*, another similar project started within the Anti-war Campaign, called ZaMir (ForPeace), which was the first BBS (Bulletin Board System), which from today's perspective we can call a simple version of internet (let's just keep it because of my technical ignorance on this level, OK?). A bunch of donated computers connected with old-school modems and phones, being servers for communication that did not exist at the time. This was our introduction to the world of e-mailing. It didn't just help connect

people in former Yugoslavia who were opposing war and nationalism, but also divided families and friends. It was a great help and organized by a few international and local activists with technical knowledge and also proved to be of great importance in events to follow.

One more newspaper is important to mention: *Arkzin*. It was the zine of the Anti-War Campaign, its first issue was published in 1991. By 1993 it looked like a regular newspaper with "irregular" content since it was writing about things that were not considered to be part of Croatia's normality or dominating values. Although not anarchist, it was open to anarchists and strongly opposed to the regime so we found common ground for cooperation. At its peak, print-run was 10.000 copies every two weeks.

In 1994, ZAPO decided to change its name so from Zagreb Anarcho-Pacifist Organisation it became the Zagreb Anarchist Movement (ZAP - Zagrebacki anarhisticki pokret) - not pacifist, but anti-militarist and anti-war. Within Anti-War Campaign this was accepted but never really discussed. There was no real need for this, since each group was acting autonomously.

Around that time, two new projects started the newsletter *Necemo i nedamo* (We don't want and

we don't give) and its English version, *Zaginflat* (Zagreb Information Potlach). In next 7 or 8 years these two newsletters were important sources of information, being published every few months, depending on money and other resources. Print-run was from a few hundred to a few thousand. The main idea was to continue with a similar idea to that which was behind *Over the Walls of Nationalisms and Wars*, but in a more informative way. In 1999, during the NATO bombing of Serbia, *Zaginflat* proved to be very important (with a lot of help from e-mails and technology provided by ZaMir). Since Serbia was under sanctions for years and now under direct attacks by NATO bombs, all communication was cut-off, foreign journalists had to leave country, and our only connection with anarchists there was ex-yu-a-lista (hosted by ZaMir), an informative e-mail list/forum for anarchists from former Yugoslavia. People would send news, stories, texts, and analysis to the list and ZAP crews and some other friends would translate it into English and publish new issues of *Zaginflat* every day during bombings. For us it was important as it was something that we could do from a distance to show solidarity and help in some way, and after we got feedback from Serbia and other people saying that this broke the total isolation they live in, it was clear that this daily publication had to continue; and it did, for two months.

In order to further understand why this was important, it would be good to describe the atmosphere in Croatia during NATO bombing. A lot of people were celebrating the fact that Serbia was getting "punished" for all the wars in former Yugoslavia and this, in turn, was the mainstream image of how people feel about it. Again, this logic of war was brought to the surface (it was already four years since war ended in Croatia) with the demonized "other side" and the idea that "all of them are same". So, solidarity was once again seen as act of treason. Anyway, *Zaginflat* was done regularly for all 75 days of bombings and distributed internationally, but also translated into many languages.

In all that time, people who were communicating through ex-yu-a-lista mostly didn't know each other personally, at least those living in countries that were at war, but just through the e-mail list. After some time, there was an initiative to organize a meeting of as many people as possible and to

establish stronger cooperation. The main idea was to connect people from Croatia and Serbia. After two smaller meetings in Hungary (the obvious choice, since people from both countries didn't need visa to get there) organized in 1997 and 1998 were not really well attended for various reasons (lack of money and organizational problems) and in May 2000 the first big meeting (over 100 people participated) was organized in Bosnia and Hercegovina in the eco-village of Zelenkovac. For most of the people it was the first time that they met in-person people with whom they were cooperating for years. Although the meeting didn't bring many concrete conclusions or projects, it was a very good point of discussion and a political statement in of itself. After all, mutual solidarity and local projects that were going on continued, this was the most important fact.

But let's go back once more to the earlier years of the war in Croatia, to be more specific, to the summer of 1993, when a few local anti-war activists and their international friends came to the town of Pakrac, divided in two by the front-line running through the town center. In July of 1993, they formed the Volunteers Project Pakrac. It's important to say that this project was not anarchist, but many anarchists did participate in it. It was, before all, a community, peace and solidarity project. The Anti-War Campaign was standing behind it and the first volunteers started to come in during the summer of 1993. Until summer, 1997, around 400 volunteers passed through the project; some were there short-term (3 weeks), or long-term (from a few months to a few years). The special quality of this project was that a bunch of utopian kids (and not so young kids) arrived in this demolished town where social connections were broken, the economy was destroyed, houses were burned down, blown-up or hit, and they decided to work on creating new social connections, peace, rebuilding houses and, to put it briefly, on all kinds of solidarity and community projects together with local people. Let's not forget that war was still going on, "peace" (well, cease-fire, really) was controlled by UN "peace-keeping" units, but life was far from "normal". Thousands of land-mines and un-exploded devices were still in and around the town. The frontline was still there, it just wasn't so active any more.

One of the main "jobs" for most of the volunteers (mostly international) was to clean demolished





Volunteers cleaning demolished house in Pakrac, 1993

houses and prepare them for re-building. This was done in cooperation with local people and home owners. Typical daily work would mean having a group of 5-10 people cleaning old/burned plaster off the walls, cleaning trash (tons of it) from houses, burned stuff, bricks, personal items (photos and toys were always a rough reminder of the real people who lived there). And then a break: coffee, rakija, food and conversation with the people who's house was getting prepared for rebuilding. So physical work was not the only important thing - interaction with people, the opportunity to talk about their problems, fears, and experiences. I guess this was somehow the most important thing. They had a chance to say things about which they otherwise couldn't speak about with their neighbors and they were "exposed" to people who got there from places where reality was very different. Where normality was not war. Not to forget the sense of international solidarity and communication that goes far beyond issues of war, nationalism and the everyday misery most of the people were facing at the time.

It would take a whole book to do a proper analysis and discuss the full importance of this

initiative, so I'll just stop here and leave it at this short description.

And what about conscientious objectors? There were quite a few, but not really public at the time; most of the people were trying to find their way around and avoid mobilization or military service (in following years), since in first year of the war there was no regular military service. The situation in Croatia was specific, social pressure was hard, same as the propaganda, and the general atmosphere was that the country was "under attack, so everyone should do their part in the war". Add patriarchal culture to that, some mythology about "men-warriors" and you have more-or-less the idea about how things were seen. "Conscientious objector" was same as "deserter". Even if there was a legal way to do it in early 1990's, it wouldn't really have mattered, since social pressure was harder then any law at the time.

Just to elaborate on what I mean by this, let me mention one event that tells a lot about the situation. In 1993, the Anti-War Campaign organized public discussion under name "The Destruction of Bosnia" that talked about Croatia's aggressive politics towards BiH and conscientious objection

as a practical opposition to war politics. Afterwards, Drago Krpina, at the time one of the more powerful members of HDZ (Croatian Democratic Union, right-wing party that ruled Croatia through the nineties) publicly said to one of the anti-war activists "You sir should be drafted, sent to front and shot in the back of your head as soon as you turn your back!". This threat aptly describes the social context in which all of this was happening, since a high government official was openly describing a model of dealing with political enemies without any fear of doing so in public, not to mention completely without legal problems.

On the other hand, pressure on all people involved in anti-war and anti-nationalist activities was always present. From public threats to secret surveillance, from attacks in the mainstream media, to "discreet" threats through neighbors, family or directly towards them. The spread of fear and paranoia by any means possible. But that is how the State works, it's just that in extreme times they use more extreme measures.

### Not really a conclusion

So, this was just a short personal recollection of a few moments of anti-militarist, anti-war and anti-nationalist struggles in the 1990's, just to get the main idea about some of the initiatives and groups involved in it. Also, I was focused on those that involved anarchists. It's important to say that scope of these efforts were much wider. For example, I didn't mention feminist/womens groups working specifically with women who were either raped or otherwise victimized in the war. And that's just one more chapter of the story that has yet to be told. Also, I didn't mention other important aspects of the struggle, like the first squatting attempts which were organized in 1994 in Zagreb and Split, while the war was still going on or the huge d.i.y. subcultural punk scene (which was quite political at the time) and its network of 150+ 'zines (just in Croatia, the total number in post-Yugoslav countries is much bigger) that were published through the 1990's. Also, ZAP organized a series of actions and protests against NATO in early 2000's which was a direct consequence of all these activities in earlier years. Still, this would take too much time and space to mention all in one place. There is much history of resistance.

But this was not meant to be a historical text, as I said at the beginning.

So, this text can't end with a conclusion, but rather a few important questions: what did we learn in all these years of war(s)? What has come of that experience now? Is everything really over?

It's hard to give definite answers. It's clear that nothing is really over, nationalism is still around, just a bit more silent, getting louder every time those in power need a new distraction, something spectacular and adrenaline-raising for masses that might rebel. War is always something to talk about. Wounds and fears are still fresh in people's minds; even 20 years later, the war still hasn't finished for some people. And for many (including those in power), war is sacred thing, something "good to remember" - the "glory days".

After all, that's an important base for nationalists all around the world. All states, no matter how small or big, celebrate their war efforts, victories and loses, as something sacred.

There's nothing good or sacred in war. There's just misery and destruction. That's the main lesson we learned. *War is the health of the state*. Nothing is more true that this simple quote, which always reminds us that the only reason for war is more power and wealth for those already in power.

On the other hand, one of the things that we learned is the importance of solidarity. No matter what the situation is or what direct effect action has, solidarity is the only thing that matters in the long-run.✌



Budućnost = Future (Pakrac)



**SOLDIERS NEVER AGAIN.**  
Never again to war for  
state and capitalism.





# Preparedness, the road to universal slaughter

Emma Goldman

Ever since the beginning of the European conflagration, the whole human race almost has fallen into the deathly grip of the war anesthesia, overcome by the mad teaming fumes of a blood soaked chloroform, which has obscured its vision and paralyzed its heart. Indeed, with the exception of some savage tribes, who know nothing of Christian religion or of brotherly love, and who also know nothing of dreadnaughts, submarines, munition manufacture and war loans, the rest of the race is under this terrible narcosis. The human mind seems to be conscious of but one thing, murderous speculation. Our whole civilization, our entire culture is concentrated in the mad demand for the most perfected weapons of slaughter.

Ammunition! Ammunition! O, Lord, thou who rulest heaven and earth, thou God of love, of mercy and of justice, provide us with enough ammunition to destroy our enemy. Such is the prayer which is ascending daily to the Christian heaven. Just like cattle, panic-stricken in the face of fire, throw themselves into the very flames, so all of the European people have fallen over each other into the devouring flames of the furies of war, and America, pushed to the very brink by unscrupulous politicians, by ranting demagogues, and by military sharks, is preparing for the same terrible feat.

In the face of this approaching disaster, it behooves men and women not yet overcome by the war madness to raise their voice of protest, to call the attention of the people to the crime and outrage which are about to be perpetrated upon them.

America is essentially the melting pot. No national unit composing it, is in a position to boast of superior race purity, particular historic mission, or higher culture. Yet the jingoes and war

speculators are filling the air with the sentimental slogan of hypocritical nationalism, "America for Americans," "America first, last, and all the time." This cry has caught the popular fancy from one end of the country to another. In order to maintain America, military preparedness must be engaged in at once. A billion dollars of the people's sweat and blood is to be expended for dreadnaughts and submarines for the army and the navy, all to protect this precious America.

The pathos of it all is that the America which is to be protected by a huge military force is not the America of the people, but that of the privileged class; the class which robs and exploits the masses, and controls their lives from the cradle to the grave. No less pathetic is it that so few people realize that preparedness never leads to peace, but that it is indeed the road to universal slaughter.

With the cunning methods used by the scheming diplomats and military cliques of Germany to saddle the masses with Prussian militarism, the American military ring with its Roosevelts, its Garrisons, its Daniels, and lastly its Wilsons, are moving the very heavens to place the militaristic heel upon the necks of the American people, and, if successful, will hurl America into the storm of blood and tears now devastating the countries of Europe.

Forty years ago Germany proclaimed the slogan: "Germany above everything. Germany for the Germans, first, last and always. We want peace; therefore we must prepare for war. Only a well armed and thoroughly prepared nation can maintain peace, can command respect, can be sure of its national integrity." And Germany continued to prepare, thereby forcing the other nations to do the same. The terrible European war is only the culminating fruition of the hydra-headed gospel,



military preparedness.

Since the war began, miles of paper and oceans of ink have been used to prove the barbarity, the cruelty, the oppression of Prussian militarism. Conservatives and radicals alike are giving their support to the Allies for no other reason than to help crush that militarism, in the presence of which, they say, there can be no peace or progress in Europe. But though America grows fat on the manufacture of munitions and war loans to the Allies to help crush Prussians the same cry is now being raised in America which, if carried into national action, would build up and American militarism far more terrible than German or Prussian militarism could ever be, and that because nowhere in the world has capitalism become so brazen in its greed and nowhere is the state so ready to kneel at the feet of capital.

Like a plague, the mad spirit is sweeping the country, infesting the clearest heads and staunchest hearts with the deathly germ of militarism. National security leagues, with cannon as their emblem of protection, naval leagues with women in their lead have sprung up all over the country, women who boast of representing the gentler sex, women who in pain and danger bring forth life and yet are ready to dedicate it to the Moloch War. Americanization societies with well known liberals as members, they who but yesterday decried the patriotic clap-trap of to-day, are now lending themselves to

befog the minds of the people and to help build up the same destructive institutions in America which they are directly and indirectly helping to pull down in Germany — militarism, the destroyer of youth, the raper of women, the annihilator of the best in the race, the very mower of life.

Even Woodrow Wilson, who not so long ago indulged in the phrase "A nation too proud to fight," who in the beginning of the war ordered prayers for peace, who in his proclamations spoke of the necessity of watchful waiting, even he has been whipped into line. He has now joined his worthy colleagues in the jingo movement, echoing their clamor for preparedness and their howl of "America for Americans." The difference between Wilson and Roosevelt is this: Roosevelt, a born bully, uses the club; Wilson, the historian, the college professor, wears the smooth polished university mask, but underneath it he, like Roosevelt, has but one aim, to serve the big interests, to add to those who are growing phenomenally rich by the manufacture of military supplies.

Woodrow Wilson, in his address before the Daughters of the American Revolution, gave his case away when he said, "I would rather be beaten than ostracized." To stand out against the Bethlehem, du Pont, Baldwin, Remington, Winchester metallic cartridges and the rest of the armament ring means political ostracism and death. Wilson knows that, therefore he betrays his original position, goes back on the bombast





of “too proud to fight” and howls as loudly as any other cheap politician for preparedness and national glory, the silly pledge the navy league women intend to impose upon every school child: “I pledge myself to do all in my power to further the interests of my country, to uphold its institutions and to maintain the honor of its name and its flag. As I owe everything in life to my country, I consecrate my heart, mind and body to its service and promise to work for its advancement and security in times of peace and to shrink from no sacrifices or privation in its cause should I be called upon to act in its defence for the freedom, peace and happiness of our people.”

To uphold the institutions of our country — that’s it — the institutions which protect and sustain a handful of people in the robbery and plunder of the masses, the institutions which drain the blood of the native as well as of the foreigner, and turn it into wealth and power; the institutions which rob the alien of whatever originality he brings with him and in return gives him cheap Americanism, whose glory consists in mediocrity and arrogance.

The very proclaimers of “America first” have long before this betrayed the fundamental principles of real Americanism, of the kind of Americanism that Jefferson had in mind when he said that the best government is that which governs least; the kind of America that David Thoreau worked for when he proclaimed that the best government is the one that doesn’t govern at all; or the other truly great Americans who aimed to make of this country a haven of refuge, who hoped that all the disinherited and oppressed people in coming to

these shores would give character, quality and meaning to the country. That is not the America of the politician and munition speculators. Their America is powerfully portrayed in the idea of a young New York Sculptor; a hard cruel hand with long, lean, merciless fingers, crushing in over the heart of the immigrant, squeezing out its blood in order to coin dollars out of it and give the foreigner instead blighted hopes and stulted aspirations.

No doubt Woodrow Wilson has reason to defend these institutions. But what an ideal to hold out to the young generation! How is a military drilled and trained people to defend freedom, peace and happiness? This is what Major General O’Ryan has to say of an efficiently trained generation: “The soldier must be so trained that he becomes a mere automation; he must be so trained that it will destroy his initiative; he must be so trained that he is turned into a machine. The soldier must be forced into the military noose; he must be jacked up; he must be ruled by his superiors with pistol in hand.”

This was not said by a Prussian Junker; not by a German barbarian; not by Treitschke or Bernhardt, but by an American Major General. And he is right. You cannot conduct war with equals; you cannot have militarism with free born men; you must have slaves, automatons, machines, obedient disciplined creatures, who will move, act, shoot and kill at the command of their superiors. That is preparedness, and nothing else.

It has been reported that among the speakers before the Navy League was Samuel Gompers. If that is true, it signalizes the greatest outrage upon labor at the hands of its own leaders. Preparedness

is not directed only against the external enemy; it aims much more at the internal enemy. It concerns that element of labor which has learned not to hope for anything from our institutions, that awakened part of the working people which has realized that the war of classes underlies all wars among nations, and that if war is justified at all it is the war against economic dependence and political slavery, the two dominant issues involved in the struggle of the classes.

Already militarism has been acting its bloody part in every economic conflict, with the approval and support of the state. Where was the protest of Washington when “our men, women and children” were killed in Ludlow? Where was that high sounding outraged protest contained in the note to Germany? Or is there any difference in killing “our men, women and children” in Ludlow or on the high seas? Yes, indeed. The men, women and children at Ludlow were working people, belonging to the disinherited of the earth, foreigners who had to be given a taste of the glories of Americanism, while the passengers of the Lusitania represented wealth and station — therein lies the difference.

Preparedness, therefore, will only add to the power of the privileged few and help them to subdue, to enslave and crush labor. Surely Gompers must know that, and if he joins the howl of the military clique, he must stand condemned as a traitor to the cause of labor.

Just as it is with all the other institutions in our confused life, which were supposedly created for the good of the people and have accomplished the very reverse, so it will be with preparedness. Supposedly, America is to prepare for peace; but

in reality it will be the cause of war. It always has been thus — all through bloodstained history, and it will continue until nation will refuse to fight against nation, and until the people of the world will stop preparing for slaughter. Preparedness is like the seed of a poisonous plant; placed in the soil, it will bear poisonous fruit. The European mass destruction is the fruit of that poisonous seed. It is imperative that the American workers realize this before they are driven by the jingoes into the madness that is forever haunted by the spectre of danger and invasion; they must know that to prepare for peace means to invite war, means to unloose the furies of death over land and seas.

That which has driven the masses of Europe into the trenches and to the battlefields is not their inner longing for war; it must be traced to the cut-throat competition for military equipment, for more efficient armies, for larger warships, for more powerful cannon. You cannot build up a standing army and then throw it back into a box like tin soldiers. Armies equipped to the teeth with weapons, with highly developed instruments of murder and backed by their military interests, have their own dynamic functions. We have but to examine into the nature of militarism to realize the truism of this contention.

Militarism consumes the strongest and most productive elements of each nation. Militarism swallows the largest part of the national revenue. Almost nothing is spent on education, art, literature and science compared with the amount devoted to militarism in times of peace, while in times of war everything else is set at naught; all life stagnates, all effort is curtailed; the very sweat and blood of



the masses are used to feed this insatiable monster — militarism. Under such circumstances, it must become more arrogant, more aggressive, more bloated with its own importance. If for no other reason, it is out of surplus energy that militarism must act to remain alive; therefore it will seek an enemy or create one artificially. In this civilized purpose and method, militarism is sustained by the state, protected by the laws of the land, is fostered by the home and the school, and glorified by public opinion. In other words, the function of militarism is to kill. It cannot live except through murder.

But the most dominant factor of military preparedness and the one which inevitably leads to war, is the creation of group interests, which consciously and deliberately work for the increase of armament whose purposes are furthered by creating the war hysteria. This group interest embraces all those engaged in the manufacture and sale of munition and in military equipment for personal gain and profit. For instance, the family Krupp, which owns the largest cannon munition plant in the world; its sinister influence in Germany, and in fact in many other countries, extends to the press, the school, the church and to statesmen of highest rank. Shortly before the war, Carl Liebknecht, the one brave public man in Germany now, brought to the attention of the Reichstag that the family Krupp had in its employ officials of the highest military position, not only in Germany, but in France and in other countries. Everywhere its emissaries have been at work, systematically inciting national hatreds and antagonisms. The same investigation brought to light an international war supply trust who cares not a hang for patriotism, or for love of the people, but who uses both to incite war and to pocket millions of profits out of the terrible bargain.

It is not at all unlikely that the history of the present war will trace its origin to this international murder trust. But is it always necessary for one generation to wade through oceans of blood and heap up mountains of human sacrifice that the next generation may learn a grain of truth from it all? Can we of to-day not profit by the cause which led to the European war, can we not learn that it was preparedness, thorough and efficient preparedness on the part of Germany and the other countries for military aggrandizement and material gain; above all can we not realize that preparedness in America

must and will lead to the same result, the same barbarity, the same senseless sacrifice of life? Is America to follow suit, is it to be turned over to the American Krupps, the American military cliques? It almost seems so when one hears the jingo howls of the press, the blood and thunder tirades of bully Roosevelt, the sentimental twaddle of our college-bred President.

The more reason for those who still have a spark of libertarianism and humanity left to cry out against this great crime, against the outrage now being prepared and imposed upon the American people. It is not enough to claim being neutral; a neutrality which sheds crocodile tears with one eye and keeps the other riveted upon the profits from war supplies and war loans, is not neutrality. It is a hypocritical cloak to cover, the countries' crimes. Nor is it enough to join the bourgeois pacifists, who proclaim peace among the nations, while helping to perpetuate the war among the classes, a war which in reality, is at the bottom of all other wars.

It is this war of the classes that we must concentrate upon, and in that connection the war against false values, against evil institutions, against all social atrocities. Those who appreciate the urgent need of co-operating in great struggles must oppose military preparedness imposed by the state and capitalism for the destruction of the masses. They must organize the preparedness of the masses for the overthrow of both capitalism and the state. Industrial and economic preparedness is what the workers need. That alone leads to revolution at the bottom as against mass destruction from on top. That alone leads to true internationalism of labor against Kaiserdom, Kingdom, diplomacies, military cliques and bureaucracy. That alone will give the people the means to take their children out of the slums, out of the sweat shops and the cotton mills. That alone will enable them to inculcate in the coming generation a new ideal of brotherhood, to rear them in play and song and beauty; to bring up men and women, not automatons. That alone will enable woman to become the real mother of the race, who will give to the world creative men, and not soldiers who destroy. That alone leads to economic and social freedom, and does away with all wars, all crimes, and all injustice.✎

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# the mars barcode: 12 illustrated shorts and a post-scriptum on capitalist war

clandestina, November 2015

## 1. war as spectacle within the bourgeois subject

The battlefield had become a mass spectacle decades before the discovery of photography. With the Napoleonic wars, the boundary between exercising lethal violence and observing it became blurred. Napoleon realized that in war, succeeding in propaganda is more important than winning a real military confrontation. Napoleon's operations had to be celebrated as victorious, even if they could not be won on a technical military level. They had to be described in detail and these glorious narratives of fighting battles had to be distributed as widely as possible. He was the first leader to make "live war reporting" as definitive as it still is for the subject formation of the Western citizen "in the peaceful world".

Military operations in war had long become mass industrial affairs and could no longer be represented in their entirety by simple observers, such as painters or writers. Now that armies had technologies of mass destruction to their disposal, a whole variety of accounts, comments and descriptions, as well as knowledge of the stages of tactical and practical preparations were necessary for "a whole battle" to be recomposed in the Press for the news-hungry public.

Over the course of the 19th century, war itself started adapting to the requirements of the

remote-controlled imagination of its consumers. Everyone could now have an opinion about how an operation would be best carried out, how its tactics should be interpreted, how a battle should be evaluated or repeated avoiding past failures. Soon, war had found a comfortable place in the everyday life of consumers in bourgeois States.

As a natural law of the global balance of power,



**IMAGE 1.** *Bonaparte visitant les pestiférés de Jaffa* (Bonaparte visits the plague stricken in Jaffa, oil on canvas, 1804, Louvre, by Antoine-Jean Gros) is a propaganda painting idealizing Napoleon's disastrous Egyptian campaign. It shows his (alleged?) visit to his sick soldiers in March 1799 in his attempt to reverse the negative rumors about him ordering plague victims to be "mercy-killed" by poisoning. The outbreak of the bubonic plague had followed the violent "sack of Jaffa" by the French army. This romantic oil-painting, with several neoclassicist elements, was exhibited in the months between Napoleon's proclamation as emperor and his coronation. It portrays the emperor as god-sent healer offering the traditional "royal touch", as he thaumaturgically lays his hand on the armpit of one of the sick.



real war would soon appear even banal.

This sense of a split between “peace at home” and “war abroad” (or “war elsewhere”) is expressed in most binary oppositions of meaning in the spectacular industries of the 20th century. The opposite genres of “news” and “entertainment” are emblematic of this dialectics - their merging in today’s “infotainment” carries their complementarity to its logical conclusion.

## 2. “the real thing”

Since the Napoleonic times, War and the Spectacle have been growing hand in hand. Together they are sowing the seeds of contemporary life.

At the end of the 19th century the cinema was still a second-rate attraction, next to the headless body, the bearded lady and the traveling circus. Its status changed with the Spanish-American war in Cuba. Vitagraph presented what it called “a document from the battlefield”. It was actually a short film shot in the studio, called *Tearing Down the Spanish Flag* (1898), where the US forces occupy a government building in Havana, pull down the Spanish flag and proudly raise the stars and stripes.

The success was followed by more such “documentaries”, with whole naval battles being set in bath tubs. The number of viewers increased dramatically, and so did the demand for more “war documentaries”. When the revolution and the war in Mexico broke out in 1910, several

US companies approached both warring parties asking them for “exclusive footage”. In the urban myth that circulated in the US conceding Pancho Villa’s contract with Griffith’s Mutual Company, Villa carried out his battles according to the film director’s guidelines. There are no sources that confirm that his contract was any different from that of his opponent General Victoriano Huerta, but turning the revolutionary Villa into a caricature was essential for American capitalism: “We’ll make you a star, but only in a way that serves our interests”.

In any case, soon viewers found the scenes filmed live on the battlefield too boring. The film industry asked itself a simple question: *Why record reality when we can actually construct it?* Viewers would still have to believe they are watching “the real thing”. And indeed, these half-fictional, manufactured newsreels from Mexico became the most popular films of the time.

## 3. reconstructing the past, building the future

In 1915 the film director D.W. Griffith carried this idea that fiction can “help create reality” a step further. He actually managed to fictively “document” the past in a way that would directly influence the future.

His *Birth of a Nation* tells the story of the first Ku Klux Klan through panoramic battle scenes of the American Civil War. The film was produced and shown at a time of brutal class war - against blacks, immigrants, workers, proletarian women and children. There were widespread protests and riots by African-Americans against the screenings of *The Birth of a Nation*, in Boston, Philadelphia and other major cities, while thousands of white Bostonians flocked to see the film.

*Birth of a Nation* not only justified the mass-murderous activity of the first Ku Klux Klan (1865-1874) but also consciously contributed to the founding of the second Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s. The impressive images of burning

crosses and armies of knights in pointed hoods had never existed in the past, but were made up as an effective tool for racism at home and wars for

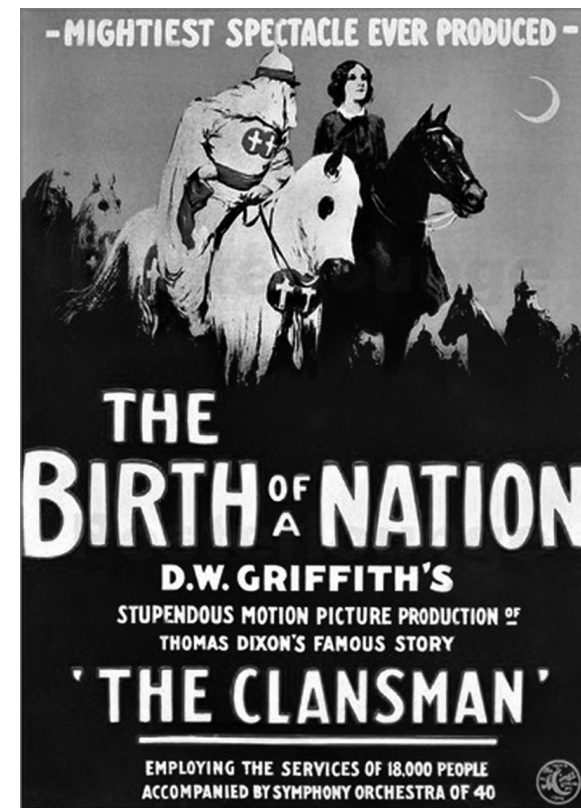


IMAGE 3. “Birth of a Nation: The Mightiest Spectacle Ever Produced”: Sometimes commercial messages simply state the truth.

expansion abroad.

In this case then, the film narrative did not merely disguise fiction as “objective historical documentation”, but helped turn an imagined future into actual reality.

Griffith’s great talent as a propagandist was appreciated by the British War Office and the French Government, when the US had to persuade its population to show some enthusiasm for entering World War I. His *Hearts of the World* (1918), filmed in Europe and Los Angeles and edited together with footage from stock newsreels, replaced the by now tedious static shots of dead bodies in muddy trenches of war films, with hysterical brutality (of the enemy), military heroism (of the allies) and breathtaking action.

## 4. distance as a facilitator of murder

In his book *Men Against Fire*, published in 1947, the highly decorated US general S.L.A. Marshall, claims more or less that in human history, the greatest part of soldiers in combat did not attempt to kill, even if it was to save their own lives. He reached this conclusion based on his own research on infantry combat effectiveness in World War II and on written sources from the Napoleonic Wars and the American Civil war. He stated that in World War II, under a quarter of US troops actually fired at the enemy for the purpose of killing, even when they were under direct threat. “The 25 per cent estimate,” we read in his sixth chapter, “stands even for well-trained and campaign-seasoned troops (...) These men [75% of troops] may face danger but they will not fight.”

Although Marshall’s “ratio of fire” theory has been fiercely criticized by other military historians for being offensive to infantry companies in World War II, his services as an operations analyst continued to be used by the US Army throughout his life, so that the death ratio be improved...

Lieutenant Colonel Dave Grossman, in his 1996 *On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society*, uses findings from the Korean War in 1950-51, where now 45% of soldiers in combat were willing to shoot to kill, and from the Vietnam War, by which time the number had dropped to 5%: This does not mean, according to Grossman, that 95% of soldiers in combat who *did* shoot in the Vietnam war were targeting someone specific, since 52,000 shots



IMAGE 2. L. M. Burrud, a cameraman present in several of Villa’s military campaigns, poses for a publicity shot showing him “filming in action”. His two Mexican “bodyguards” are shown half-naked to conform to the American stereotype of the “Indian”.

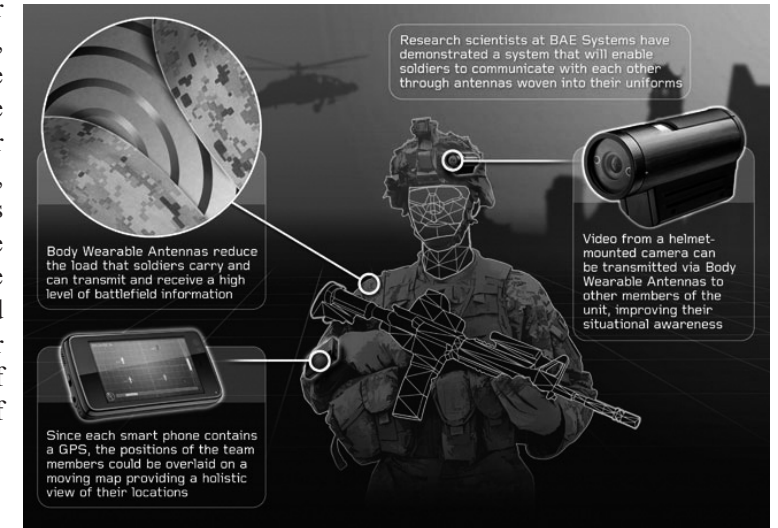


IMAGE 4. In the era of drones, *haute couture* is finally more about aesthetics than about practicality.



were fired for each hit, which indicates that most of the shooting was mere “posturing”.

In fact, the magic factor that increased the murderous effectiveness of military operations was distance. Rates of death in combat from attacks by artillery and aircraft are immensely higher than amongst foot troops with a rifle. Distance reduces the reality of death by turning it into charts, graphs and symbols.

The sentimental distance will allow an armed individual to kill more easily from a short distance. The enemy is de-humanized in the eyes of the soldier (by military training and propaganda, with the help of drug consumption), and thus the enemy is treated either as a mere object, or as an inferior form of life (and our culture definitely teaches us that extinguishing inferior life forms is perfectly legitimate). In the Desert Storm Operation, “night vision” made fighting war feel like playing a Nintendo game.

With drone technology this distance from weapon to target of modern warfare has now been multiplied, including also the distance from the operator of the weapon to the weapon itself: A drone can be several thousand miles away from the person controlling it. The operator of the drone is not situated on some “battlefield”, there is no reciprocity in the direct threat to the enemy, or in the violence the operator inflicts.

Considering that the US Army alone owns over 6,000 drones of various kinds, and that the number is growing as we speak, they form an important part of military operations worldwide and are emblematic of warfare today. Until now, hunter-killer drones have been used in Afghanistan, but also in Somalia, Yemen and Pakistan. Drone warfare is legitimized by the US army and its theoreticians as “humanitarian”, and as “warfare without risk”. That probably means “without risk for the side of the drone operators”. The question that arises for the Western middle classes in peaceful regions is, in Gregoire Chamayou’s words (from his *Drone Theory*): “What would be the consequences of becoming the subjects of a drone state be for the state’s own

population?”

In a world of constant warfare, the parties who are actually fighting each other are not distinguishable anymore. “Enemies”, “conflict zones”, “potential threats” and therefore “targets” are being invented anew all the time. So the “applied” answer to this question does not lie in some distant future.

## 5. war games and screen battles

*From the cockpit of an F-16 flying at 5,000 meters, you can’t see, nor smell, nor be sprayed with the blood of “collateral damage.” The sensory reality of war has been detached, cleaned away from the “productive” activity of the warrior, as it has from the language of NATO’s reports on the alleged “mistakes.”*

Massimo De Angelis and Silvia Federici  
“The War in Yugoslavia. On whom the Bombs are Falling?”  
[http://www.midnightnotes.org/pamphlet\\_yugo.html](http://www.midnightnotes.org/pamphlet_yugo.html)

Virtual military training games like “Full Spectrum Warrior”, designed by teams of university scholars, game industry programmers and military advisors, turn war into a frivolous triviality. Their function is to construct a new psychosocial condition where constant readiness for war becomes an accepted part of a sane individual’s everyday behavior.

The technique is simple. The actual content of whole war universes in MMO (Massively Multiplayer Online) games connects the triviality of the war-form to the “natural expansiveness” of capitalism and the values of aggression for survival and racial inequality. Militarization and murderous expansion, miniaturized and turned into a harmless, immersive action-packed

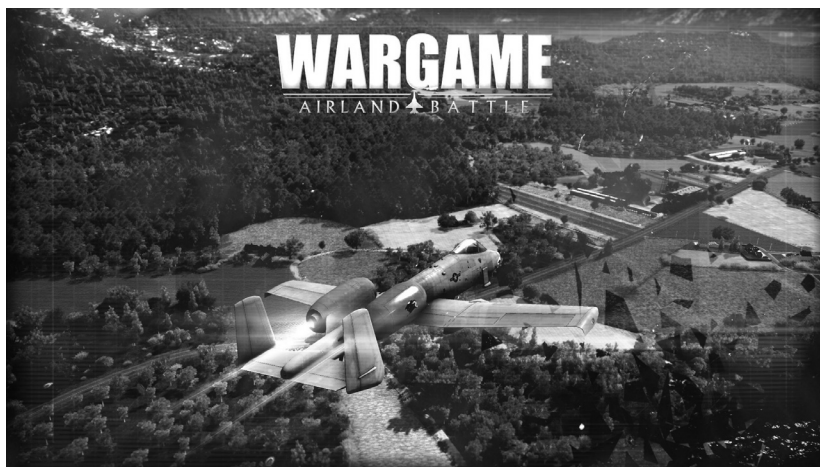


IMAGE 5. So much livelier than the “real thing”

quotidian experience become commodified entertainment - entertainment that guides kids through the process of learning to treat life (potentially, in a bad psycho-social moment, also their own life...) as unworthy of anything but scorn and disdain.

The boundary between reality and representation in war, as well as between pedagogical murder-promoting images and descriptive-informative images of murder, has become blurred. Its very existence is challenged, (this time not just in ex-postmodern theory). The case

of the Russian soldier who uploaded selfies on instagram from an unknown spot in the military confrontation for the control of Eastern Ukraine in July 2014, thus betraying his own location, might be slightly ridiculous. Yet the case of the ISIL volunteer uploaded on his twitter account a photo of his 7-year-old son holding the head of an ISIL victim, certainly is not.

## 6. private troops, private weapons

According to Peter Singer’s *Corporate Warriors: The Rise of Privatized Military Industry* (2003) in the 1990s, the services of private contractors (PMFs=private military firms) were used in over 50 countries, in every single continent but Antarctica and there used to be 50 military personnel for every one contractor. In 2004 the ratio was 10 to 1. The number of contractors reached its apogee in Iraq, where in 2006 it is estimated that at least 100,000 of them were working directly for the United States Department of Defense.

Some UN officials point to the “difficulty separating private from public troops”, which means that legal proceedings against non-state contractors like PMFs do not necessarily burden the state that hires them for security and combat. There is currently no legal framework applied to these firms. A beneficial side-effect of PMFs for Americans has been the relative decompression of organized crime at home, since a lot of murderous activity is now being “exported”. Also, important killing know-how gained by Iraqi occupation forces is brought back home to be shared with the

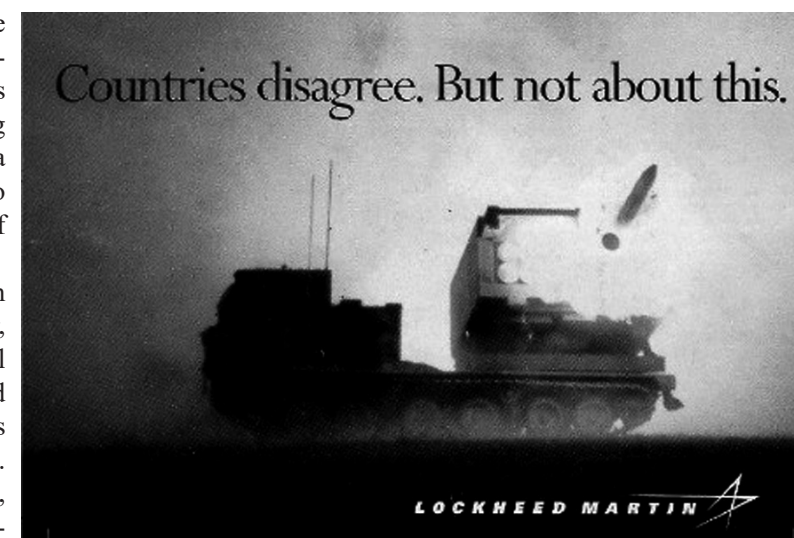


IMAGE 6. The arms trade guarantees global harmony.

US police.

The war industry is one of the most powerful and dynamic sectors of the global economy. According to Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) reports, in the last five years, the years of the so-called “global crisis”, the global arms trade has risen by 16%, with the US remaining the greatest export power: Their 31% share of the market accounts for a 23% increase between 2010 and 2014, compared to the preceding 5-year period. Russia, owning a 27% of global arms exports, presented an increase in their share by 37%. It has been estimated that every year, world military expenditure totals over 1.5 trillion dollars. The greatest part of this business corresponds to the sale of small weapons to “developing” countries.

According to a Reuters report, in 2007 there were 90 guns per 100 people in the US. On October 5, 2015, the *Washington Post* reported that “[t]here are now more guns than people in the United States”.

At the moment, there is roughly one firearm for every seven people on the planet.

## 7. money is the homeland of war

*The Enlightenment myth that the modern commodity-producing system sprang forth from a “Civilizing Process” (Norbert Elias) as the product of peaceful trade and development, bourgeois industry, scientific curiosity, inventions that raised the standard of living, and daring discoveries in opposition to the brutal culture of the so-called*



*Middle Ages has proven tenacious. As the bearer of all these beautiful things is named the modern “autonomous subject,” which supposedly freed itself from feudal-agrarian bonds in favor of the “freedom of the individual.” What a shame then that the form of production that arose from this mass of pure virtues and progress is characterized by mass poverty, global pauperization, world wars, crises and destruction.*

Robert Kurz, The “Big Bang” of Modernity

Was modern war born from the conditions imposed by the capitalist market, or did the use of cannons, innovative firearms and early modern private armies actually intensify abstract market relations and impose the expansion of capitalism? The question is hard to answer. In any case, if war and market today are not one and the same thing, PMFs and the global arms trade are only two of the links between them.

The people who make our clothes, our toys, packaging, building material, who send our post and repair our computers, work in factories built and organized according to the military model. Classic slavery conditions in Africa, China, SE Asia, Latin America, as well as automated workplaces like *amazon.com* all borrow insights and formal principles from the army. This seems like a metaphorical relationship between the

management of big companies and principles of military organization, yet it extends far beyond metaphor.

From the first English and later French and Dutch colonial companies in the 16th century, which were licensed by King and State at home to have their own armies abroad, the expansion of markets for “development and enterprise” has always been connected to military operations and colonial plunder.

Also in terms of the “content” of production, the basic pillar of the “heavy” component of the chemical industries in Western Europe and the US in the 19th century was the modernization of war. Innovations in deadly gas, weaponry and ammunition, also contributed to the advancement of mass agribusiness and energy production technology, which in turn it managed to set global prices and control a big part of production, quality and distribution for fuel and basic foodstuffs and also to create tens of thousands of commodities for mass consumption.

Big companies manufacturing perfumes, soaps and medicine have always offered their innovations for weapons of mass destruction. What used to be the military-industrial-media complex for a big part of the 20th century is a network of contractors for military staff, weapons, security services, information and individual products for the mass market. It has its own legal safeguards

and business standards and is powerful enough to control and orient a big part of scientific research worldwide towards its own techno-scientific interests.

Take the example of DuPont, “one of the most successful science and engineering companies in the world” as it calls itself. With over 150 R&D facilities in China, Brazil, India, Germany and Switzerland, DuPont invests an average of \$2 billion annually in a diverse range of technologies for markets including agriculture and nutrition (gmo seeds et al.), genetic traits, biofuels,

automotive, construction, electronics, chemicals, and industrial materials. The company began in 1802 as a manufacturer of gunpowder, becoming the largest supplier to the US military in the American Civil War. Soon, it moved to the production of dynamite (proposing also its use in agriculture), bought shares in General Motors, and, as the inventor and manufacturer of nylon, played a major role in WWII production contracts for parachutes, powder bags, tires, as well as in the design and operation of the Hanford plutonium plant. Its bullet-resistant vests for the police and military, developed in the 1960s, are still being used today.

Interesting 19th to 21st-century stories showing up the links between war profits and the production of consumer commodities in “peacetime” can be told of numerous companies, even through a quick analysis of any name on a Forbes list of powerful players. The history and current operations of “beyond borders” companies, from IBM to Unilever to Bayer to Syngenta and Monsanto, to ICBC, Exxon Mobil, General Electric, JPMorgan Chase, Wells Fargo, Royal Dutch Shell, HSBC, Samsung, Allianz, Daimler, AXA Group, Nestle, Mitsubishi, Google ... weave a long web of mass exploitation, constant rounds of primitive accumulations, and targeted mass destruction across the planet.

Since the last quarter of the 20th century, these economic arrangements are tied to material production without even resorting to the excuse of some equivalence of “cost” to “labor”, but through relations of exploitation and war. They are supported by a very real but seemingly virtual and abstract system of banks and finance companies – that actually trade in a virtual, abstract commodity, magically a-chronic (since it projects its power into the distant future) called monetary value.

The most tragicomic aspect of the relationship between war and the economy remains this mysterious symbiosis of the ideology-free politics of money and death in the name of the nation. A good example is the Greek-Russian Basil Zacharoff (1849-1936), one of the richest men in his time. At the peak of his career as a world-class criminal, Zacharoff was trading in arms, owned newspapers, a bank and a Press agency. During WWI he did his best to accelerate the entry of Britain in the war (selling advanced weapons simultaneously to Brits, Germans and French)...

His business was to make money and death circulate as widely, as steadily and as quickly as possible. At the same time, he was working as a multiple agent for both sides. He died knighted in Britain, decorated with the higher medal from the Legion D’Honneur in France and the Cross of Salvation in Greece, having done business with all the above countries. He is now remembered officially as a great benefactor, who helped the Pasteur Institute, offered relief funds for the Corinthian earthquake victims in Greece and sponsored Chairs in literary Studies at Oxford and the Sorbonne.

## 8. the puzzle of anti-imperialism in the Middle East

During WWI, the notorious Lawrence of Arabia, an agent for the British Empire, invents and employs modern guerrilla theory and turns scattered elements of Arab nationalism into a full-blown political movement ready to face the Ottoman troops with whatever it takes. When, later, capitalist interests turn towards oil, the Middle East acquires a new importance.

The Office of Strategic Services, a wartime agency formed to coordinate espionage activities, and a predecessor of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), organizes the first coup in the recently established States in the area. Husni al-Za’im, former officer in the Ottoman Army, and later officer in the French Army (after France instituted its colonial mandate over Syria), seized power in Syria in 1949 in the first military coup in the political history of the country, sponsored by the US. It was a “smooth transition” from Anglo-French colonial rule to a protectorate of European Powers, with a constitution copied from the French, and a clear attempt to both suppress all internal liberal voices for political and social change, and to secure control away from the Europeans.

In the 1950s the CIA will support pan-Arab nationalism and help Gamal Abdel Nasser establish his presidency in Egypt, sending him advisors who will promote antisemitism, while the US, and all Western States, are pushing for the militarization of Israel. As nationalist Arab States are turning towards the USSR, the West encourages Israel to become a State of perpetual war.



IMAGE 7. In *The Broken Ear* (1937), the sixth volume of the Belgian cartoonist Hergé's *Adventures of Tintin*, Basil Bazaroff is an arms dealer supplying arms to both sides in a conflict, after having helped incite it. The character is a direct allusion to Basil Zacharoff.





**IMAGE 8.** An official ceremony in Tehran on February 1, 2012, with guards carrying a cardboard Khomeini, representing the 1979 Air France flight sending Khomeini to Iran to “lead the revolution”.

The West will soon opt for islamist movements in Arab countries, hoping that religious ideology will replace an increasingly left-leaning Arab nationalism. In February 1979 Giscard d’Estaing, (after protecting the exiled muslim cleric and politician Ayatollah Khomeini at a villa in Neauphle-le-Château near Paris), sent the later “Supreme Leader of Iran” on a special flight to Tehran so that he could take control of the Iranian revolution.

Throughout the 1980s the US secret services support the islamist mujahedin against the Soviets in Afghanistan, and also back Iraq against Iran. In 1991, Iraq becomes an enemy, and, between 1992-1995, Iranian “guards of the revolution” fight in Bosnia next to the NATO troops against Serbian paramilitaries. After the fall of Saddam Hussein’s regime, NATO cooperates with Iran both in Afghanistan and in Iraq - and today most of Baghdad is actually controlled by Iran. In Yemen, Iran cooperates with the Houthi who are fighting against the Sunnī government which is backed by Saudi Arabia, which in turn is supported by the West, which in Iraq is cooperating with Shīite Iran against the Sunni fundamentalists and the remnants of the Baath Party, while in Syria the West is cooperating with the Sunni fundamentalists against Assad and with the PKK against the Sunnī in Syria and in Iraq.

The Western States cooperate with the Turkish State against the PKK, while the Turkish government also supports Hamas against Israel, which was selling weapons to Iran during the war

against Iraq and also provided Pakistan with armaments that were then handed over to Afghani mujahedin in the war against Soviets in Afghanistan...

So in the 1980s the US government and its Western allies were clearly supporting Islamic fundamentalism one way or another...

“Divide and rule”, this has been the principle for the maintenance of warfare and chaos and the management of death in the Middle East, orchestrated by sequences of on and off alliances of Western and Middle Eastern governments.

One wonders, then, on what grounds do certain left movements see any prospect for liberation in the Islamic fractions of the Iraqi resistance, in Hamas, in Hezbollah, in Mahmoud Ahmadinejad...? One also wonders, on what grounds do some others see Israel as the “sole democratic force” in the region?

#### 9. the world war after the cold war: military liberalism and the new invisible dead

*Projected on a global scenario, the war on Yugoslavia appears as the other side of the process of financial recolonization that has taken place in much of the world over the last decade, and the increasing subjugation of every aspect of life to the rule of money. By this rule markets have been introduced where previously there were commons, welfare provisions have been cut across the globe, workers’ entitlements have been reduced or eliminated, poverty has been imposed worldwide (...) This war that the World Bank, the IMF and other financial elites managing the global economy are waging, ultimately needs missiles and other deadly weapons, to keep people on course, producing for the global economy, at rhythms and retributions favorable to capital accumulation.*

Massimo De Angelis and Silvia Federici, 1999  
The War in Yugoslavia: On Whom the Bombs Are Falling?  
[http://www.midnightnotes.org/pamphlet\\_yugo.html](http://www.midnightnotes.org/pamphlet_yugo.html)

The “political economy” of an arms and

*military apparatus, detached from society and only sustainable via abstract labor, became independent of its original purpose. From the early-modern military despots’ hunger for money rose the principle of the “valorization of value,” which operated under the name of capitalism from the early 19th century. The rigid shell of military-statism was cast aside only to allow the now-independent money machine to progress as a pure end in itself within an “economy isolated” (Karl Polanyi) from all social and cultural shackles, and to give free reign to anonymous competition. This form of total competition bears the mark of Cain that bespeaks its origins in total war, even down to its terminology. It is no coincidence that Thomas Hobbes, founder of modern liberal state theory, declared the “war of all against all” as the natural human state. It was the proponents of the so-called Enlightenment who translated the imperatives of the “isolated economy” into an abstract philosophical ontology of the “autonomous subject” in the 18th century, which had nevertheless been predefined by the totalitarian value form.*

Robert Kurz, The “Big Bang” of Modernity



**IMAGE 9.** The character Yuri Orlov in *Lord of War* (2005) says: “Without operations like mine it would be impossible for certain countries to conduct a respectable war. I was able to navigate around those inconvenient little arms embargoes. There are three basic types of arms deal: white, being legal, black, being illegal, and my personal favorite color, gray. Sometimes I made the deal so convoluted, it was hard for me to work out if they were on the level.”



companies, mobile phone and mining companies, companies in the energy sector and arms companies from the G7-G8 countries were having a party.

The bloodiest were the war in Rwanda, that started in 1990 and culminated in the summer of 1994, with the massacre of half to one million Tutsis, the war in Sierra Leone (1991), that lasted a decade and left 50,000-300,000 dead, the war in Burundi (1993-2005) with 300,000, and the wars in Congo (1996-7), with 250,000-800,000 dead. The precise numbers of casualties will never be known, since these wars were never in the limelight, with the exception of the Tutsi-Hutu war, that proved “how inferior those blacks still are”, just like “those Balkan peoples, who for some reason still insisted on killing each other”.

The first Iraq war overshadowed those “crazy Balkan” wars and totally blocked the view to the peripheral wars - Africans seemed destined to die by the thousands. Yet the actual effects of the first and much celebrated hi-tech war in the history of humanity were also hidden by the blinding lights of publicity: 1,5 million Iraqis died from the famine and epidemics caused by the sanctions enforced by the West.

The decade after that did not bring the millennium virus for PCs, neither some spicy aftermath of the Clinton-Lewinsky affair. It was the decade of the War Against Terror, launched with the invasion of Afghanistan and of Iraq in 2003. Wars in Africa continued out of sight out of mind: The war in Congo intensified, a second civil war broke out in Liberia (with up to 300,000 dead according to estimates) and in Darfur, an armed conflict began that is still going on - with 178,258 to 461,520 dead (depending on the source) and almost 3 million displaced people.

During that same period another war broke out that would also go unnoticed for a long time. What the president Felipe Calderón (2006-2012) called the “war against drugs” was actually a war of the Mexican State and para-State apparatus against the population. 100-150,000 people have been killed in the last nine years. It seems that only the massive reaction and protests against the disappearance of the students in Ayotzinapa, with the creation of citizens’ militias and self-defense groups and the establishment of autonomous zones in Guerrero and Michoacán -until then only Chiapas had autonomous regions- were able to set up a kind of barrier against the State’s governance

through extermination.

The Arab Spring in 2011 was first downplayed in the dominant media as merely the inspiration behind the “occupy” and “squares” movements in cities in the US, Europe and Israel. Yet in many ways, the Arab Spring was much more important. The Tunisian insurrection was particularly upsetting for supporters of the global status-quo, who watched demands for social justice emerging from self-organized structures from below, and couldn’t believe the revolutionary spirit of populations that had for decades been conditioned to channel all conflict towards authoritarian militarist solutions, towards Arab nationalisms, antisemitism and Islam. Very soon, the Arab Spring was crushed everywhere by the winter of militarism and fundamentalism: Attacks and civil war in Libya, the transformation of the popular insurrection into a conflict against Islamic fundamentalists and the military coup in Egypt, the civil war in Syria suppressed the memory of the hopeful and unprecedented uprisings of 2011 to near extinction.

In 2013 and 2014 the representation of wars in Syria and Iraq, as well as of the Israeli bombings in the Gaza strip were the tombstone of the Arab Spring, while the spectacular resurrection of an alleged conflict between State fascism and State anti-fascism, complete with hammers and sickles, Byzantine Eagles, nazi anti-imperialists and EU anti-imperialists served to show that capitalist peripheralism is the only alternative to capitalist globalization.

The number of migrants who lost their lives in the Mediterranean between 2014 and 2015 so far is greater than the total deaths in the Gaza bombings and deaths in the Ukraine war. Noone however seems willing to describe this as a war of civilized Europe against the victims of Western companies. Also, the huge sacrifice of lives in Syria only made it to the spotlight after the ISIL’s advancement in Iraq.

The war in Southern Sudan, possibly as deadly as the Syrian war, began in 2013 (after the official establishment of peace in Darfur). According to ICG data, it has cost the lives of 100,000 human beings. The war we have learnt not to lose our sleep over has inspired some minor box office hits, such as *The Tailor of Panama*, *Hotel Rwanda*, *Blood Diamonds*, *Lord of War*, *The Constant Gardener*. Even if these films (besides sentimental

laundering) often speak the “uncomfortable truth” about the global system of domination, in the end their message comes with a warning: “Learn to live with your neuroses and insecurities, or else... this is what we do to the rest of the world.”

## 10. trophies of war as science and entertainment

Today’s war trophies look like well-built basketball players or exhausted travelers in migrant “reception centers”. In fact, Indians, Asians and Africans have been on show since the beginning of the modern colonial period.

Columbus brought some humans back from the New World to be studied in the Spanish Court. 16th century Vatican aristocrats like Hippolytus of the Medici owned, besides exotic animals, whole collections of different human races - Moors, Tartars, Africans and Indians.

19th century freak shows, with Siamese twins and microcephalic children, or the live exhibit in London and Paris of the “Hottentot Venus”, Saartjie Baartman, a South African Khoi-San Namaqua woman prepared the grounds for the 1870s mass spectacle of human zoos. They could be found in Paris, Hamburg, Antwerp, Barcelona,

London, Milan, Marseilles, Warsaw, New York and several US cities. In 1874, Greenland Eskimos were exhibited in the Hamburg Animal Park for the first time...In 1877, the addition of human Nubians and Eskimos to the Paris *Jardin d’Acclimatation* exhibition brought a profit of 57,963 francs to the organizers from the tickets of a record 985,000 visitors...(Africans and Inuits were soon to be accompanied by Lapps, Argentine Gauchos and others...) In Paris, over thirty ethnological exhibitions were organized between 1877 and 1912. Visitors kept going... The Parisian World Fair in 1889, displaying 400 indigenous people, was attended by 28 million other humans.

In 1896, to increase its visits, the Cincinnati Zoo invited 100 Sioux native Americans to live there for six months...Fine curiosities such as the Congolese pygmy Ota Benga at the Bronx Zoo in New York City was exhibited breastfeeding chimpanzee babies for a low cost ticket in 1906. The 1925 Belle Vue Zoo exhibit in Manchester displaying black Africans as savage beasts was entitled “Cannibals”...The human zoo tradition officially ends with the EXPO 58, the World Fair in Brussels, the *de facto* capital of the European Union.

## 11. anti-imperialisms

*The final position of Marx and Engels on war is not at all straight-forward but perhaps in summing together the social and economic analysis we can get this picture: war is absolutely essential in the period of “primitive accumulation” in order to create the conditions of accumulation (especially the expropriation of laborers from the land) but with the establishment of a capitalist mode of production, war related expenditures become increasing antithetical to the accumulation process.*

George Caffentzis  
“Freezing the Movement and the Marxist Theory of War”,  
*In Letters of Blood and Fire*, PM Press 2013, p. 214.

The world domination system is settling into its post-Cold War shape and new calls from the left and the right are urging the creation of anti-imperialist fronts. This revival of “anti-imperialism” feeds into the general confusion.

What has been called anti-imperialism has always been a rather vague concept, that was



IMAGE 10. Poster for the Stuttgart “Show of the Peoples” during the “social-democratic” Weimar Republic in 1928.





IMAGE 11. “The New Vietnam” is the title of an article in a Greek (liberal) newspaper in 1995 presenting Greek volunteers in Bosnia (mostly members of the neonazi party) as anti-imperialist fighters in a “new Vietnam” against the US and the “New World Order”. Greek businessmen had been very quick to see there was profit to be made in the neighboring Balkan countries after the collapse of “communism”. Promoting ideological confusion was part of their strategy of economic intrusion. The construction company (ELLAKTOR) now building roads in Southern Serbia belongs to George Bobolas, owner also of the above mentioned newspaper, *Ethnos*, of Pegasus Publishing S.A.

either connected to the dogmatic description of “imperialism [as] the highest stage of capitalism” (the title of Lenin’s famous booklet), or to struggles in the peripheries of capitalism sacrificing millions of lives to the national flag... Most crucially, it became a tool in the trade and diplomacy tactics of states and companies in the Eastern bloc. It served as the main argument for plunder, exploitation and oppression of the Soviet state, and later of the Chinese. Hundreds of thousands of red soldiers died for freedom in their states’ antagonism with the West.

In all its versions, anti-imperialism was closely tied to militarism, statist centralism and the cult of growth and development. Yet this “applied

marxism” of totalitarian regimes in the 20th century was no misunderstanding, it was no abuse of the ideas of Marx and Engels.

In the mid-nineteenth century Marx and Engels saw a positive aspect to the planetary expansion of capitalism. In their view, with capitalist expansion, Enlightenment values and culture were also spreading across the world.

Industrial growth would create an industrial proletariat everywhere that would “pave the way for the Communists”. In the long run, colonialism would turn against capitalist interests, since, on the one hand the growth of commerce would force States to co-exist peacefully, while on the other, it would set the stage for international class struggles.

Engels would write about the French conquest in North Africa in the *Northern Star*, (22 January 1848): “Upon the whole it is, in our opinion, very fortunate that the Arabian chief has been taken. The struggle of the Bedouins was a hopeless one, and though the manner in which brutal soldiers, like Bugeaud, have carried on the war is highly blamable, the conquest of Algeria is an important and fortunate fact for the progress of civilization.”

Karl Marx, in the *New-York Daily Tribune*, August 8, 1853, wrote about British colonialism in India: “England has to fulfill a double mission in India: onedestructive,theotherregenerating[.] the annihilation of old Asiatic society, and the laying [of] the material foundations of Western society in Asia.”

The turn of European States towards expansion through war and military antagonism towards the end of the 19th century, (rather than through “peaceful conquest” or “constructive intervention”) proved Marx’s predictions wrong. Most marxist analysts, in need of a new theoretical framework, did not follow Rosa Luxembourg’s realization that the laws of the economy alone do not explain capitalism, let alone help overthrow it.

For Lenin it was exactly those laws of the

economy that would inevitably lead to the bloody inter-imperialist conflict that in turn would lead to the collapse of capitalism. Lenin was fiercely critical of Luxembourg’s position that the struggle for national independence contradicts the struggle for emancipation. Leninist tacticist “scientific socialism” preferred to instrumentalize all national liberation struggles, along with all inter-imperialist oppositions, and to subjugate them to the state-communist master plan.

Both Lenin’s idea that capitalism would inevitably collapse under the weight of inter-imperialist conflicts, and Karl Kautsky’s belief that international cartels and the different national monopoly capitals will ultimately collaborate in a peaceful ‘joint exploitation of the world’”, were blown to pieces in World War II. After what for the governments was the “great”, “anti-fascist”, “patriotic” world war, the State anti-imperialists adjusted their views.

So the Soviets, and later the Maoists, proclaimed that in the 20th century the central conflict was no more between capitalists and workers, but between developed capitalist countries and dependent peripheral countries. For them, the task of anti-imperialist communists across the globe was to strive for “equivalence in primitive accumulation” and to promote national unity and industrial growth in peripheral countries.

This new “anti-imperialist imperialism” of state capitalism completed the expansion of capitalist relations across the planet. Exploited workers in peripheral countries first and foremost belonged to a nation rather than a class. National identity was the best tool for the control of local peripheral populations, and militarism the best way to “defend the revolution”.

Towards the end of the 1970s the “revolutionary plan” to “bring the conflict over to the capitalist West”, in order to fight “in the heart of the beast” (Jose Marti/Che Guevara) actually transferred the conflict to the opponent’s ground. Social movements (especially in Italy and Germany, the most significant movements at the time) became *de facto* subordinated to the activity of armed groups that directed political, social and cultural resistance towards an armed opposition between State mechanisms and small militarized formations based on ideology. The winner was easy to predict.

The Maoist “theory of the three worlds”,

according to which China and India belonged to those nations that were being exploited by the superpowers and their allies, and in the name of which tens of thousands of guerillas across the world lost their lives, was turned into a diplomatic tool of public relations... It was the period in which the Communist Party of China was being transformed into what it is today. It managed to switch to a different model of totalitarianism without even having to change its name.

In sharp contrast, anticolonial struggle and antimilitarism, as inseparable aspects of anticapitalism and antistatism, have always been intrinsically connected in the thought and practice of anti-authoritarian, autonomous, libertarian and anarchist movements. The long history of Spanish anarchist organizing (1896-1939) is perhaps the most eloquent example. For anti-authoritarian movements (in Latin America before WWI, in the practices of the IWW in the US, in the councils of Bavaria, of Budapest, of Turin, of the Ukraine between 1918-1923, in German and Italian anarchist and autonomous and anarcho-sindicalist currents) imperialism was never the final phase where capitalism would be “historically fulfilled”. They could see: European colonialism, ever since the conquest of the New World, is the first stage in the global domination of capitalism.

### 12. the camp as a method of civilian management

The legal distinction between soldiers and civilians was introduced with the Hague Convention in 1899. Based on Abraham Lincoln’s 1863 Lieber Code, (which had codified regulations regarding e.g. the treatment of deserters or parole to former rebel troops if they changed their mind and wanted to serve the nation), It defined the responsibilities and rights for each category, and also specified what kinds of weapons could be used “in any war between signatory parties”. It underlined the importance of an entity called international law.

International law was the premise established by the “civilized countries”, as the signatories of the Convention called themselves. They had been spreading war and mayhem across the planet, but now they were feeling uncertain about their own reproduction. It was time to create an environment more favorable to “peacetime” business, and hence to issue formal statements about what constitutes





**IMAGE 12.** A snapshot from the “left-majority” government of the Syriza-ANEL coalition in Greece: Hunger strike of migrants at the Paranesti “pre-departure center” near Drama, Greece, in April 2015, renovated with State and EU funds in early 2015.

a “war crime”, and what is allowed under “martial law”.

All of the rules laid down by the first and the second (1907) Hague Conventions would be violated in the years to follow. Yet a long time before the German invasion of Belgium in 1914 “with no explicit warning” (in violation of the Convention), and before Germany’s introduction of poison gas (another such violation), months after this emblem of the will for peace and disarmament of the great powers, Britain, the winner of the Second Boer War, set up military concentration camps for civilians in South Africa, where black Africans (over 100,000) and Boers (27,927 according to reports) would lose their lives.

These South African concentration camps were not the first in the civilized world’s recent history: During the Spanish-American Wars in Cuba and in the Philippines, internment had been widely used. The US government’s mass detention and decimation settlements for the Cherokee and later for the Dakota Indians had been the initial inspiration for this new “camp movement” that was to become an evergreen fashion for

the control of populations. However, the South African case was perhaps the first where extreme military practices targeted the whole population, became an integral part of official State policy, and soon became naturalized in public discourse. Refining Napoleon’s early biopolitics, detention camps now set an ideological example. They were at once military “direct action” and State “propaganda of the deed”. By the beginning of the next century, the army’s methods of handling POWs had become customary state practice for the management of whole populations. German camps in West Africa and later Italian camps in Libya would ensure standard performance of killing, violence and repression.

Now everyone agrees. War is the model for peace. The specialized, professional army is the model for governance.

Refugee camps today are intertwined with the tradition of the military management of civilians. For international law, they are considered humanitarian aid and are run by the UN, or NGOs such as the Red Cross. They can host up to tens of thousands of people, often for several years, and are very vulnerable to disease and epidemics.

Contrary to the myth that the West is “carrying a lot of the weight of refugee mobility”, 80% of displaced people, notably from Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Liberia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, are in such “temporary settlements” in Africa and Asia. In a world where forced mobility is growing, an estimated 14 million people officially qualify as refugees, and many more as plain migrants. At the borders of Europe (and Australia, and the US...), their survival depends on pure luck.

### summary and post-scriptum

*Such a perfect democracy constructs its own inconceivable foe, terrorism. Its wish is to be judged by its enemies rather than by its results. The story of terrorism is written by the state and it is therefore highly instructive. The spectators must certainly never know everything about terrorism, but they must always know enough to convince them that, compared with terrorism, everything else must be acceptable, or in any case more rational and democratic.*

G. Debord, *Comments on the Society of the Spectacle*, 1988

We have looked at several aspects of what we see as two dominant historical developments in the modern world: 1. *the monetization of war*: the transformation of primitive accumulations into a global evergreen business), the militarization of its economic relations (from the total labor separation of the army from other social activities in the 18<sup>th</sup> century that Robert Kurz describes, to the full development and refinement of mass killing from a distance in the “era of the drone”), and 2. *the militarization of labor relations and of governance of whole societies*: from the armies guarding the diamond mines, to the military style arrangement of mass production units, to the use of the concentration camp and the military defense of the border as a model for the management of whole populations – of people forced to move and flee from all kinds of war.

Ten years ago, Retort subtitled their book *Capital and Spectacle in the New Age of War*. One of the things we are trying to say here is that perhaps a pertinent way to describe the mental map upon which we see the dynamics of power operating today is through paraphrasing, and partly reversing, that subtitle: War and Capital are giving birth to a New Age (or rather a further

stage) of Spectacle. The mutual encouragement and cross-fertilization of, on the one hand, capitalist relations (fetishizing the “expression of value” and the imposition of this abstraction by the sword, without socially creating value, as Anselm Jappe has explained in his *Adventures of the Commodity*) and, on the other hand, of modern warfare, constantly produce further separations within the bourgeois subject.

These separations (i.e. abstract representations of social relations that, in terms of how a person understands the world, gradually disconnect labor from creating, understanding from producing meaning, experience from responsibility), solidify and naturalize what Debord called the Spectacle. The successive expressions of the Spectacle can be sought in the development of mass media regimes in the modern world, from the everyday newspaper to the cinema, to television, to web 2.0. – all of which are linked to representing war and are rooted in military technology (in the metaphorical and raw-material sense of the word).

Symbolized by the conceptual-cum-ideological poles within the bourgeois subject (peace at home / war abroad, fighting a war / reporting a war, news information about war / entertainment away from the warzone, populations worth living with privileges/populations that deserve to disappear, people who are useful / people who are not, watching on a screen / fighting on a screen, mass-communicating from a distance / mass-killing from a distance), give rise to the mass psychopathologies within the dominant human type of our times.

George Caffentzis has shown how the militarist legacy of anti-imperialisms is founded upon the premises of Marx’s “theory of war” – or lack of it. Instead of simply ideologizing the war-money power complex cutting up and through the planet, the struggle for life should be guided by the insistence on antimilitarism of autonomous and anarchist movements throughout recent history. Once again, there is no use resorting to the (traditionally, but not exclusively, left-wing) anti-imperialist worship of weapons and military struggle. Many realize by now that the culture of war leads society to the worship of death. Only by taking into account the structural narcissism of today’s simultaneous feeling of super-potency and confused powerlessness of the drone fighter,



(a narcissism already present in the immersive disengagement of the online “social media” user), only if we grasp the concreteness and danger of a sense of self whose actions and imagination are divorced from creating reality (i.e. divorced from producing for society and making decisions for oneself and one’s community), could we start understanding the historical aspect of the emergence of the self-destructive individual willing to take as many others as possible down with them to their grave, merely in exchange for a flash of imagined post-mortem publicity.

After the murderous attacks on Friday 13 November 2015 in Paris, anticapitalist circles seemed to agree on the general evaluation that “it is imperialism that should be blamed”, or, more precisely, that Western citizens are now confronted by the consequences of their own countries’ imperialist politics. Let us note here that this period is technically not the most violent in the history of capitalism - not from the standpoint of military expansion nor of rounds of primitive accumulation. Even in recent times, there have been bloodier episodes in France itself. In the 1960s France was at (colonial) war with Algeria and with its own citizens: On October 17, 1961, the French Police attacked an “illegal demonstration” of some 30,000 pro-National Liberation Front (FLN) Algerians, “killing 70 to 200 Algerians and throwing dead bodies and wounded people in the river Seine, from the Saint-Michel bridge”, according to officially accepted accounts. Yet back then, nobody thought of blowing themselves up in response. And this was not due to tighter border controls. As our friend Ernie Larsen points out, “in the midst of the anti-colonial war(s) people never detonated themselves—that now strangely familiar brew of fanaticism and religiosity would have been rightly seen as reactionary in the 60s. Militants were prepared to sacrifice their lives in the midst of struggle, if necessary—this we could say perhaps marks the border between passion and fanaticism.”

Some analyses talked of an “inside provocation” within the general chaos of capitalist destabilization, of a conscious decision by para-State circles to spread more terror in order to impose stricter control measures. But here there seem to be no analogies whatsoever with the Piazza Fontana case... The question “qui bono?”, i.e. who benefits from the attacks?, (the answer

to which is initially Russia, but more might take advantage) does not help in answering the question “who is responsible”.

There is no certainty as to the consequences of any action at the moment within this broader scheme of chaos and confusion in the geopolitical arena. The only thing that has emerged as a given fact in the last quarter century, is that after the end of Cold War, global capitalism definitely chose “the islamic threat” as a replacement for “the communist threat”, while before it had collaborated with Islam against the State capitalism they called “communism”.

Sometimes scarecrows are effective as mere scarecrows, sometimes though they morph into a self-fulfilling prophecy, against the will of their own creators. Capitalism as a system might not be under threat, yet the dominant relations between its ingredients definitely are - and many die in the process. The state of siege that many global cities find themselves in today might not have been intended by the global system of domination, however chaos can be managed to its benefit: The State of Israel for example has for decades reproduced itself through an economy of permanent war and a society of total control. It seems that it would immediately collapse without internal enemies like Hamas or Hezbollah. However: While a “global Israel” might indeed be a fully sustainable model, since it can infinitely reproduce its polarities through permanent warfare, we are by no means implying that a conscious decision has been made by the ruling classes to implement such a model worldwide. To do so would be vulgar conspiracy theory - which in fact quite a few people, left and right, feel comfortable subscribing to.

Many feel ISIL chose France this November as the “the heart of the Enlightenment itself”. Such interpretations say more about the mindset of the people expressing them, than about the actual motives of ISIL. Many European citizens might still be proud of the European cultural tradition, yet for the countries of the capitalist periphery, the European continent stands for colonialism, not Enlightenment values. Enlightenment supporters indeed advocated the abolition of slavery, yet the “superiority of the European race” and “of our civilization” was for two centuries the basic ideological foundation and political argument of colonial plunder. Furthermore, it looks like the

Paris attacks were not addressed to the “periphery”, they were primarily an appeal to all those in the West “ready to die in the new holy war”.

Others have stressed the need to “*at last do something about Islamists, beyond all that political correctness about religious tolerance*”. Yet even if religion has no doubt been the classic form of false consciousness, never have religious wars broken out for religious reasons. In the specific case of ISIL attacks, most of the perpetrators have not even been raised within an Islamic social context: The construct of “jihadism” was presented as the Absolute Evil by the very society they were born and bred in (in other words, in a European country) and they simply chose to go against this society. The ultra-violence of these self-destructive fanatics is indeed a horrific threat, yet it is not Islamic at all... The society of the spectacle reaches its ironic peak: Facebook, youtube, *Dabiq* (ISIL’s glossy propaganda “instrument”, actually just another *lifestyle* mag set up with Adobe’s latest InDesign)... all become ingredients in a dystopia crammed with images, allegedly promoting the most anti-representational, un-iconic, iconoclastic religion!

Let us repeat some basic banalities. The Arab Spring was followed by dictatorships and wars in Egypt, Libya and Syria. In Syria, bloody proxy wars were fought in search of a new balance of global power. It is common knowledge that the West played a decisive role in the creation of ISIL and in its supply with weapons and equipment, that it tolerated ISIL as it was growing, and that it sponsored it through partaking in its illicit oil trade. It is common knowledge that most of its basic actors were born and raised on European soil.

In recent times there has been a lot of suicide-bombing activity in the periphery, familiarizing populations in Lebanon, Turkish Kurdistan, Palestine and elsewhere with everyday killing and destruction. Suicide bombers in the West become familiarized with death through the everyday plight of survival in capitalism. On the facebook page of one of the suicide bombers there were photos of the 2007 riots in the Parisian *banlieues*. He deleted his own “profile”, just as the dominant language deleted the meaning of those riots. The call for jihad through the so-called social media is a call for an essentially meaningless act, it is the virtual celebration of a desperate, ecstatic moment

of death and mass killing, fast and glorious, with no future and no perspective. Today’s suicide attacks have more in common with school shootings in the US than with the armed activities of e.g. palestinian organizations in the 1970s.

Lives are not numbers and life cannot be counted. Yet numbers can speak volumes about today’s “culture of death”. The number of people who have lost their lives in attacks in Madrid (2004), London (2005) and Paris (2015) by perpetrators who were mostly Europeans, is comparable to the number of victims of shootings at schools and colleges in the US during roughly the same period. In 2015 alone, there have been 35 such attacks in schools, over 1,000 people have been killed by cops’ bullets since January 2015, while mass shootings by “disturbed” killers in the US since 2006 have claimed the lives of reportedly 1431 people.

Even if the territoriality of ISIL were annihilated, even if its material basis were fully exterminated, there is nothing to guarantee an end to the production of suicide bombers. Capitalism mass-produces emptiness. The periphery does not even expect “inclusion” or “growth” anymore. In a world of globalized despair, so-called “social media networking” is taking the concept of *integrated spectacle*, that Debord analyzed in his 1988 *Comments*, to its logical explosion.

Twenty years ago, *capitalismus invictus* was forcefully challenged by the first real-life “cyber-guerilla”: The black flags and red stars, the head covers and the new hope of the Zapatista revolution were a real threat to the alleged invincibility of the system. The song of life interrupted the soporific lullaby of the Spectacle.

Today the dominant powers across the world are trying to convince us that ISIL’s black flags and hoods are the actual Absolute Evil, yet it is too obvious that ISIL is singing the same deadly tune as they are. It is frightening to see how the notions of “global networking” and “horizontality” could get so distorted, notions that once rose out of the Lacandona Jungle and the Movement for Social Justice... Horizontal networks of killing cultivated via facebook are rapidly reversing the idea that “anyone can be wearing the hood”. For the EZLN it is anyone who cannot accept subordination, devaluation of life, and compromise - for the jihadist mutation it is anyone who is willing to trade a meaningless life with a meaningless- but



spectacular- death.

Geopolitical scenarios, conspiracy theories, anti-imperialist rhetoric... none of it will work. The Party of Death can only be fought with collective resistance, personal creativity and solidarity, with the constant refinement of a social, full-hearted, life-affirming gesture. 🦋

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# Greek militarism in the age of SYRIZA

*This paper was presented for the first time at the 5th Antimilitarist Gathering organised by the Barefoot Battalion on 4-5th September 2015, in Ioannina, Greece. It was then enhanced to include the period shortly after the elections of 20th September 2015.*

## Xupoluto Tagma/Barefoot Battalion

### The continuation of the State

It is a fact, that the issue of anti-militarism is not always a central issue on the agenda of the anti-authoritarian movement and its structures. This has been the case in Greece for many years, and is especially true today. The total number of social and class struggles has clearly decreased. Despite the valuable legacy of recent struggles, they have not managed to overcome internal and external limitations in order to halt the increasingly intensified undermining of our class. Capitalist restructuring continues to rampage our lives, worsening our position within the fields of social struggle and decreasing the possibilities of collective action and thought.

Arguably, it is precisely during such a critical period, when inter-capitalistic competition makes war an increasingly less remote reality, which can be simply ‘shoved under the carpet’, that anti-militarism should preoccupy us in a much more serious and targeted way. The sweeping statements traditionally adopted by the Left that imply an antimilitarist approach (ie. opposing NATO or US foreign policy), have succeeded in attributing a certain ‘anti-imperialist’, confrontational character to their own agents and have masked the true nature of militarism and the way it has weaved itself into our everyday lives, into our neighbourhoods, in the structures of ‘our own’ state. There is a general tendency to view fascism, nationalism and racism as exaggerated deviations (from the otherwise ‘democratic’ European norm) and as socio-historic elements of only specific eras or states, as in the case of Germany during WWII. Similarly,

militarism seems to be perceived as a phenomenon that is only apparent in remote dictatorial regimes (where leaders wear military uniforms and tanks roam the streets) or in the ‘exceptional’

chapters of contemporary greek history (such as the military junta between 1967-1964). In any case, an analysis of militarism which focuses neither on N.Korea nor on the military junta of 1967, but instead, focuses its’ attention on Greece in 2015 under the rule of SY.RIZ.A, is not the ‘hottest’ of subjects. Even though Rosa Luxemburg taught us almost 100 years ago that “militarism in both its’ forms – as war and as armed peace – is a legitimate child, a logical result of capitalism”. However, we hope that through efforts such as this one, the genetic relationship between militarism and the state will become clear.

In today’s ‘reality’, the Greek Army, national defense and -so called- national affairs seem to be veiled in an invisible, protective bubble that nobody dares to rupture. Despite the end of the two-party era<sup>1</sup>, with its’ long term alternation of the same political figures, and despite the proclamations of SY.RIZ.A about a new era of “first time Left Wing” and the supposed sidelining

<sup>1</sup> The post-war scene of parliamentary politics in Greece was dominated by the interchanging of two main parties: the right wing party of ‘New Democracy’, and the center/ social democrats of PASOK.





of the old political regime, at its core, the state has carried on its' business as usual. This, off course, comes as no surprise to anyone who understands the inextricable link between militarism, the status quo and the role of the government in administering and preserving class oppression.

In SY.RIZ.As' case, at the same time as developing its' partnership with AN.EL (the far-right party that has joined SY.RIZ.A to form the current coalition government), it also managed to exploit and absorb the social struggles that took place in recent years, particularly from the greek equivalent of the Indignados movement that resided for many months in Parliament Square in Athens, to protest against austerity. By



20/10/2014 the future PM in the Ministry of Defense

using the language of political and civil rights movements, but embedding it with a hefty dose of anti-memorandum patriotism, SY.RIZ.A set out to deflect the more radical, class-struggle elements of these movements, replacing them instead with more harmless demands for “democracy, progress and civilised values”. Therefore, it not only managed to assimilate the types of resistance in which it had more or less participated in, but it also hijacked and capitalised on the demands of political movements that had never actually liaised with the party, by banking on their internal contradictions. It then presented itself as the only ‘pragmatic’ representative of this new, dynamic social force that emerged during that period of social upheaval. In this respect, along with gaining the support of parts of the capitalist class, the petty bourgeoisie and petty bosses, it is not a surprise that it also managed to gain the support of low waged workers and the unemployed. It also attracted many of those who had recently got off

their sofas and had taken to the streets, but had become demoralized by the lack of immediate impact of their efforts, and were therefore prepared to deposit their hopes for a better future on a representational party-political structure which made many promises and contradictory claims.

At this point we must make an important note. The ‘peoples’ hope for better living conditions was not the only factor that led to SY.RIZ.As’ growth and rise to power. One of the most important factors was the desire of the bourgeoisie to ensure public consent. It is often said that in the ‘art’ of governing humans, the whip must be accompanied by the carrot. Although in the past, the two-party system had been successful in undermining our labour power, it did so without sufficient public consent. The only way to create a more solid ground from which to perpetuate and maintain exploitation, was to come up with a new ‘recipe’ of governance which would allow capitalist restructuring and austerity measures to carry on without interruption. Instead of achieving this through the usual mixture of riot police, plastic bullets, teargas, destabilization and street protest, this new ‘recipe’ aims to achieve it through widespread public consent.

The pre-election campaign made many important promises including an end to the various austerity programmes, the re-hiring of fired workers, pay-rises, a guaranteed minimum wage of 715 Euro for future generations, as well as committing to grant the demands of grassroots campaigns like the anti-gold mine struggle in Skouries, Chalkidiki. These false promises are the reason why those who initially wanted to believe them, are now making countless accusations of betrayal in the post-election period. For most people, however, SY.RIZ.A appears to have remained loyal and consistent to its’ claims for maintaining stability, restructuring the parliamentary system, guaranteeing the development of Greece within Europe, relieving small-scale businesses and securing the market from further shocks.

In our case, as anti-militarists, we really do not feel deceived. When, following a meeting with army chiefs on 20/10/2014, Tsipras’ proclaimed that “the state will go on”, we did not feel as though the true nature of the future coalition had only just appeared before our eyes. In the past, SY.RIZ.As’ participation in the Conscientious

Objectors movement had confused many people in believing that as the party rose to power, things would change (even if at the very least that meant less state persecution of conscientious objectors by the state). Yet, SY.RIZ.A has always deliberately kept a vague attitude on matters of the army and national defense, limited to claims for further “democratization and transparency” of the institution. Specifically, when it came to the issue of military service and the treatment of total objectors, there was a deafening silence before the elections.

In the last three years, there has been only one difference<sup>2</sup>:

If in 2012 – while SY.RIZ.A. was still in the opposition – it was necessary for five MPs to file a question in order for the 6000 Euro fine to be adjusted to the financial means of the accused, in 2015<sup>3</sup> SY.RIZ.A, as a ruling party, legislated that a question must be depoted by (at least) 46 MPs. No mention of abolishing conscription, no alternatives to military service, not a word about the absurd criminalisation of those who avoid being drafted, not the slightest concern for the persecution and convictions of their own supporters... On the other hand, there was plenty of concern about the closure of army camps in Arta, Konitsa and Filiates<sup>4</sup>. Similarly, worries had been expressed regarding the potential closure the only training centre for new recruits in Arta. These worries had been expressed in the context of a parliamentary question, signed on the 28/09/12 by three of the SY.RIZ.A MPs in Epirus, namely Gerovasili (prefecture of Arta), Mandas (prefecture of Ioannina), Barkas (prefecture of Preveza)<sup>5</sup>.

At this point, we should note, that even though the State has continued its’ business as usual since the coalition of SY.RIZ.A & AN.EL have taken over state administration, this does not mean that nothing has changed. If this was the case, we would not have to re-examine the current state of affairs or re-evaluate our aims and objectives. The mere fact that the state can carry on with its’ strategy but with greater tolerance from the public, is an extremely significant and alarming development. Militarism, therefore, is one of the fields in which the continuation of the State becomes totally

2 <https://left.gr/news/SY.RIZ.Aekm-na-anatheorithei-koinonika-adiko-prostimo-ton-6000-eyro-se-anypo-taktoys>

3 <https://left.gr/news/drastiki-meiosi-toy-exofrenikoy-prostimoy-6000-eyro-gia-toys-anypotaktoys-zitane-voyleytes-toy>

4 As seen in Olga Gerovasilis’ statement on 19/07/13 (See [http://SY.RIZ.Aartas.blogspot.gr/2013/06/blog-post\\_9768.html](http://SY.RIZ.Aartas.blogspot.gr/2013/06/blog-post_9768.html))

5 [http://SY.RIZ.A-artas.blogspot.gr/2012/10/blog-post\\_9890.html](http://SY.RIZ.A-artas.blogspot.gr/2012/10/blog-post_9890.html)

obvious- whether through the states’ strategies around foreign policy, or through the persecution and oppression of antimilitarists.

The aim of this presentation is to expose the relationship between expansionism and militarism and how it relates to the constructed concept of national unity. We believe that the successful implementation of military preparations, both within and beyond the country’s borders, is a necessary prerequisite in order for the Greek bosses to achieve their expansionist aims (for example in the scramble over the Exclusive Economic Zone which aims to expand the country’s control at sea). These preparations require a solid sense of national unity which will act as a melting pot for conflicting social and class interests, by disarming and absorbing class struggle in favour of ‘national interest’ and the ‘debt to ones’ country’. A debt that requires our own blood as payment.

### A closer look at the examples

“After all, the rule of diplomacy by which there are no age-old friends or enemies, but merely age-old interests, is unquestionable.”

Stavros Tzimas, Kathimerini, 24/07/15

“The ‘Kosovo’ Card”

It is clearly obvious Greece’s central geostrategical interests, during this period, lie in the eastern Mediterranean<sup>6</sup>. The strengthening of the alliance between Greece-Cyprus-Israel-Egypt is the greek governments’ number one priority. The greek state is currently participating in joint military exercises with Israel and Cyprus, forming a strong alliance to best serve capitalist interests in the Eastern Mediterranean. Greece’s absence from the U.N. vote (10/09/15), in regard to the proposal to hang the Palestinian flag outside the organization’s headquarters, should in no case be seen as accidental. In fact, the annual multinational joint naval drill between Greek, Israeli and American naval forces continues under the code name “NobleDina”, since Greece replaced Turkey in the drill in 2012. This year’s drill started from the military base in Souda (Crete) on 29/04/15<sup>7</sup>. In a rather suspect coincidence, the exact same day, prime minister A. Tsipras held a meeting - for the first time ever- with Egypt’s dictator El Sisi.

6 For further info see: “The Eastern Mediterranean Strategy”, Autonome Antifa, 2015

7 <http://navaltoday.com/2015/05/18/us-greece-and-israel-wrap-up-exercise-noble-dina/>





08/11/2014 Antonis Samaras & the dictator

The meeting took place on Cyprian soil, hosted by the president of Cyprus, Anastasiades. Another meeting took place soon after, during the grand opening of the new Suez Canal on the 6/08/15. Not long ago, in an even stranger coincidence, just one day before the 21st of April, the Greek defense minister P. Kammenos traveled to Cairo to make an agreement ‘on issues of defense’<sup>8</sup>. The agreement included an arms deal whereby Greece sold 100 used battle tanks to Egypt<sup>9</sup>. While being in the lead opposition, A. Tsipras repeatedly attacked the previous right-wing government leader, A. Samaras, for holding meetings with El Sisi who, as Tsipras proclaimed, was part of the military regime that murdered and imprisoned Egyptian rebels.

Today, the military continues its’ missions’ beyond the country’s’ borders in order to secure Greece’s’ place in a number of expansionist plans. To this end, Greece took part in NATO’s’ annual military naval exercise - Sea Breeze 2015, held by the U.S. and the Ukraine in the Black Sea, directly contesting Russia<sup>10</sup>. Efforts to upgrade the country’s’ geostratigical status continue in every direction- whether through plans for gas pipelines or disputes over Exclusive Economic Zones (E.E.Z.). On the 19th of June, the greek media reported the signing of a preliminary agreement between Athens and Moscow allowing the passage of a Russian gas pipe through greek soil. The pipeline is estimated to be completed in



21/04/2015 Panos Kammenos & the dictator

2019<sup>11</sup>. Greece is strengthening its’ position in NATO by planning the construction of new bases in the near future. In a meeting between Greek defense minister P. Kammenos and U.S. deputy defense minister Christine Wormouth, at the U.S. Pentagon on the 21/05/2015, the Greek proposal for a new base in Carpathos was discussed. It’s worth noting that in all the speculation going on about Greek capitalism and how it may be forced to leave the eurozone, there was never an issue about the country leaving NATO. In fact the secretary general of the Stoltenberg Alliance, commented on how the new Left / far right coalition government “never loses the opportunity to declare its allegiance to NATO and I salute them for it”<sup>12</sup>. In the same statement he maintained that Greece should not reduce its military spending. Let it also be noted that this so-called ‘Left’ government maintains a proportionally huge amount on military spending in relation to the country’s’ GDP. In 2014, the amount of military spending summed up to 2,2% of the GDP, percentage second only to the U.S. within NATO.

Greece’s efforts to reconstruct the Greek weapons industry follow similar spirit. On 22/02/15, an announcement on the webpage ‘defencenet.gr’, declares the first major success of the Ministry of Defense in trying to revitalize the National Defence Industry (NDI). During IDEX 2015, the military exhibition at Abu Dhabi, P.Kammenos secured an agreement worth 100m. euros annually for repairing and maintaining the

United Emirates’ Mirage aircrafts based at the hangars in Tanagra<sup>13</sup>. The deputy Defense Minister, Kostas Isihsos, during his visit to the border region of Pogonio on 8/05/15, held a meeting with the manager of the Metalworks Industry Of Epirus, George Adamos, promising him a ‘take-off’ of profits through the renewal of the industry’s collaboration with (the state-owned) Greek Defense Systems. At the same time he announced the creation of a War Museum in Kalpaki, which “will lead to an increase in tourism in the area but will mostly remind visitors of the valor and sacrifice of the Greeks when fighting for their ideals, but also the hardships of war.”<sup>14</sup>

At the same time, the supply of arms continues, with the most outrageous example being the decision of the Governing Body for Foreign Policy and Defense (KYSEA), to upgrade 35-year-old antisubmarine aircrafts<sup>15</sup>. In fact, only one and a half months after the elections, Kammenos got an approval from the prime minister and council members to close a costly deal with the American company Lockheed, contracted to modernize military aircrafts for 500m. dollars. Former defense minister Dendias had repeatedly tried to implement this same programme right up until the elections. He faced several reactions within his own party (the right wing party of New democracy), the ministry of finance and from Th. Dritsas, an MP of SY.RIZ.A, who claimed that “SY.RIZ.A will not accept proceedings from a

13 The first major deal for the defense industry: P.Kammenos bagged the UAEs’ Mirage 2000-9, defencenet.gr, 22/02/15  
14 <http://www.agon.gr/news/117/ARTICLE/29651/2015-05-10.html>  
15 <http://www.protothema.gr/politics/article/467377/krauges-kai-psithuroi-ston-suriza-gia-ta-500-ekat/>



29/04/2015 The Left Leader & the dictator

biased agreement.”<sup>16</sup> It was obviously impossible for such a deal to be achieved by a government lacking in public support, amidst the crisis and at the eve of the election. However, their successors found it easy to implement it. Only 48 days after the election, Kammenos managed to get the approval of both the prime minister and KYSEA members, in order to convince the finance staff to fork out the 45 mil. dollar deposit needed to secure the deal with the American company. Perhaps Dritsas’ anxiety to strike the deal before his government was voted out, had something to do with the potential bonuses that sometimes accompany contracts such as this one..

On the other hand, in regards to domestic militarism, things are again pretty similar. The militarized management of migration and the constant undermining of migrants continues. SY.RIZ.A has fully accepted Greece’s role as Fortress Europe’s border guard and is in fact using it as a negotiation tool, threatening that they will unleash the wave of ‘Jihadists’ towards Europe whenever the sensitive matter of european funds is mentioned. In the informal meeting of E.U. foreign policy ministers in Riga, Latvia, N. Kotzias warned in a manner only a far-right politician could, that “there will be millions of immigrants and thousands of Jihadists unleashed upon Europe should Greece collapse financially”<sup>17</sup>. More and more conscripts are sent to complete their military service in the northern border of Evros, where

8 <http://www.tovima.gr/politics/article/?aid=696684>  
9 Kyriakatiki Demokratia, 26/07/15, “F-16, frigates and tanks for sale!”  
10 5..<http://www.mc.nato.int/PressReleases/Pages/NATO-Naval-Forces-Began-Operations-in-the-Black-Sea.aspx>

11 [http://www.huffingtonpost.gr/2015/06/19/oikonomia-politiki-russia-ellada-agogos-fysikou-aerion\\_n\\_7618954.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.gr/2015/06/19/oikonomia-politiki-russia-ellada-agogos-fysikou-aerion_n_7618954.html)  
12 <http://www.tanea.gr/news/politics/article/5254140/stoltenpergk-h-ellada-den-prepei-na-meiwsei-tis-amyntikes-ths-dapanes/>

16 <http://www.onalert.gr/stories/parmvasi-syryza-gia-ta-exoplis-tika-gia-ta-opoia-leei-oti-den-desmey-etai/40112>  
17 <http://www.skai.gr/news/politics/article/276838/kotzias-ekatanastases-kai-hiliades-tzihadistes-stin-europi-an-katarreusi-i-ellada/>





25/03/2015 From the wings of a Left wing military march

Frontex and the newly built Wall manage the flow of migrants and refugees created by the greek state and its' allies. As the military and coastguard continue to drown refugees in the Aegean, those who manage to survive are then hypocritically 'welcomed' and supported in the islands and concentration camps along the borders. Hundreds of refugees are transferred from one makeshift camp to another and the army is brought in to manage and supervise their 'well being'<sup>18</sup>.

The Greek army has never stopped training troops to be used in riot repression. Neither has the infamous 71st airborne regiment ceased its activities. And how could it, when the military is destined to intervene whenever it's little brother - the greek police, has a rough time. As revealed by the Head of the general navy staff, Kosmas Christides, just in the recent past, the armed forces have been asked to intervene on civic matters at least three times<sup>19</sup>. However, we have to give it to the police for looking up to it's older brother, the army. The famous drones that were supposedly going to save us from forest fires are currently in the hands of the Greek police. Their acquisition was set forth after several meetings of greek officials with an Israeli corporation, during the height of public protests in 2011. The main mission of these drones is obviously to be used as surveillance as part of the repressive, anti-immigrant, and anti-terrorist policies of the Greek state.

Ideological propaganda aimed at boosting national conscience, has also intensified. The ruling party, in its' recent past as the lead opposition, used to characterize military marches

18 <http://www.rizospastis.gr/story.do?id=8541602>

19 <http://www.koutipandoras.gr/article/110844/treis-fores-zitithike-apo-strato-na-katevei-sto-dromo-apokalypitei-o-epitimos-arhigos>

songs and soldiers giving away treats to dancing patriots in Syntagma square. The military is planning the publication of school books, which will promote the nations' 'just' claims against Germany on the matter of wartime compensation<sup>20</sup>. Moreover, SY.RIZ.A MP Konstantinos Barkas, representing the prime minister, set out to continue the so-called North Epirus struggle, an age-old imperialist aspiration that has its sights set on the north-western border of Greece. In his speech during the first electoral assembly of the candidate mayor of the city of Himara (Freedy Beleri, 20/05/15), which was full of chauvinistic war-mongering, he speaks of a 'national struggle' that must be fought "for the sake of a part of the Greek population which must be brought back to us..."<sup>21</sup>

At the same time, plans to recreate MOMA-military engineer units that existed in the post war era involved in the restructuring process, have been approved and are ready to exploit the unpaid labour of conscripts forced into the army. The army's first Engineering Unit (DIDERGON), is already in operation and is taking on and managing contracts for public projects such as road construction and highway maintenance<sup>22</sup>. Ideas of how to further exploit the unpaid labour offered by the obligatory military service system include appointing teachers and doctors who are completing their military service in schools and hospitals. The only thing they'd get in return is a

20 <http://www.tanea.gr/news/greece/article/5218615/enhmerwsh-se-sxoleia-kai-strato-gia-germanikes-apozhmiwseis-melata-h-kybernhsh/>

21 He is off course referring to the remaining traces of greek-speaking communities on the other side of the Albanian border, See - [http://www.pelagioskoritsas.gr/2015/05/blog-post\\_11.html](http://www.pelagioskoritsas.gr/2015/05/blog-post_11.html)

22 <http://www.onalert.gr/stories/epemvasi-stin-ikaria-apo-to-mixaniko/43763>

as an anachronistic residue of fascist inspiration. However, it not only failed to abolish them, but on the contrary, it restored the use of battle tanks that had been previously withdrawn from their predecessors due to the high expense on fuels during the crisis. Furthermore, the military parade on the 25th of March 2015 in Athens was 'spiced up' with junta-like celebrations, including military bands playing folk

work experience certificate... Another interesting idea is Kammenos' plans to include women in the basic army training programme, on a voluntary basis, in order for them to "be able, if needed, to deal with any danger facing our country and also staff services that would disengage other personal needed in battle"<sup>23</sup>.

In conclusion, we must also mention that the prosecution of objectors has also continued, with court trials, fines and financial burdening, and even house raids without warrants against objectors.

To mention a few incidents:

29/04/15- Police raid the family home of Th.Nedelkopoulos who is accused of avoiding being drafted and had been issued a warrant for his arrest.<sup>24</sup>

14/05/15- Total objector M.Tolis was charged with draft evasion and sentenced to 10 moths imprisonment with a 2-year suspension (which is two months more than what he was charged with under the previous far-right government)<sup>25</sup>

16/06/15- The Athenian Appeal Courts reinstated the 10 month sentence of 48 year old conscientious objector D.Sotiropoulos

17/06/15- Objector Th. Chatziaggelou was sentenced to 10 months imprisonment with a 3 year suspension

25/06/15- Total objector D.Chatzivasiliadis was charged with draft evasion and sentenced to a total of 16 moths. A new fine of 6000 EURO was also issued, the third of its kind.

Numerous applications for alternative military service by objectors, have been systematically refused by army authorities and the Defense Ministry.

As we can see, in the age of SY.RIZ.A, the greek state, the army, militarism (which is infiltrating the social fabric with matters of 'national importance'), and domestic stability (which allows the development of expansionist

23 <http://www.efsyn.gr/arthro/skepseis-gia-ethelontries-gyn-aikes-ston-strato>

24 [xupolutotagma.squat.gr/2015/04/30/sxetika-me-thn-eis-voli-sto-spiti-olikou-arnhth-nedelkopou-lou-29-04-15/](http://xupolutotagma.squat.gr/2015/04/30/sxetika-me-thn-eis-voli-sto-spiti-olikou-arnhth-nedelkopou-lou-29-04-15/)

25 [xupolutotagma.squat.gr/2015/05/27/enimerosi-2o-strato-dikeio-m-tolh-14-05-2015/](http://xupolutotagma.squat.gr/2015/05/27/enimerosi-2o-strato-dikeio-m-tolh-14-05-2015/)

foreign policy)- all are carrying on their business as usual.

## Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)

"International Law is national interest equipped with better Army, Navy and Air forces"

Ioannis Mazis,

Geopolitics: Theory and practice, Papazisi, 2002

In order to understand SY.RIZ.As' political strategy on militarism, we must clarify a number of things. Firstly, SY.RIZ.A has been part of the greek state for decades. As in the case of the Greek Communist Party (KKE), SY.RIZ.A has constituted the left side of the state for years, and has a long history of balancing the states' stability, of mediating class differences and absorbing social struggle. Secondly, if we define the state as the collegial body of the ruling class then it would be a mistake to regard a state and its' government as the same thing. Contemporary states, including Greece, have institutions, goals, objectives and strategies that follow a historic continuum.

Despite the difficulties facing greek capitalism in the last five years, it became obvious early on, that the greek state intended to make full use of its' potential geostrategic importance in order to improve its' status. In an article to the Financial Times on 20/02/15, Marc Chandler sets his arguments for "Greece's huge geopolitical importance", and states: "the country is not being rewarded enough for its invaluable contribution to Europe's common defense"<sup>26</sup>. And so, in the last five years concepts and terms such as geopolitics, geostrategy, exclusive economic zones and gas pipelines have inundated the media, and along with a host of specialist gurus, have set out to convince us that all the above are the key to us surviving our collective devaluation imposed by the bosses. In the short space of this introduction, we will try to highlight the main aims of greek foreign policy. For this purpose, we will look at the example of the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and attempts to define it over the last few years. Specifically, even though the Law of the Sea makes reference to the Continental shelf and Exclusive Economic Zones as early as 1982, the greek public became accustomed to the latter term only in 2010.

26 [http://www.euro2day.gr/ftcom\\_gr/article-ft-gr/1305921/paramonh-ths-elladas-sto-evro-axia-ane-k-timhth.html](http://www.euro2day.gr/ftcom_gr/article-ft-gr/1305921/paramonh-ths-elladas-sto-evro-axia-ane-k-timhth.html)





The map above outlines the greek states' definition of the greek EEZ. Even at a first glance, it is immediately clear that Greece has its eye set on most of the eastern Mediterranean. This represents a revival of old imperialist tendencies (Great Idea)<sup>27</sup> and comes into direct conflict with the aspirations of neighbouring states. The main points of friction are the Diapontia islands on the border with Albania, Gavdos on the border with Libya and the 'legendary' Kastelorizo on the border with Turkey.

Kastelorizo is a key site for greek foreign policy because it not only gives Greece full sovereign rights over a huge area, including fishing rights, it also means that the greek EEZ will border with that of Cyprus<sup>28</sup>. In recent years, greek bosses

27 Great Idea (*Megáli Idéa*) was an irredentist concept of greek nationalism, that expressed the goal of establishing a greek state that would encompass all ethnic greek-inhabited areas, including the large greek populations that were still under Ottoman Empire rule after the greek War of Independence, with Istanbul as its new capital. It was proposed by PM Ioannis Kolettis in 1844.  
28 Following the military fiasco over the islet of Imia in 1996, the greek state attempted to use Kastelorizo to strengthen its' foreign policy. During that time a well-known right wing radio station (SKAI FM) attempted to setup a new station in Kastelorizo from which it would broadcast its shows. The whole operation was abandoned shortly after.  
Then in 2010, G. Papandreou, Greeces' prime minister at the

have understood that there are hugely important shifts taking place across the wider Mediterranean area. To this end, Greece, has on the one hand participated in most of the wars taking place in the area (from Afganistan and Iraq, to Libya and Syria), and on the other hand has desperately sought to be part of any international block that will grant its' unreasonable demands in the Aegean sea. The most characteristic example of this, is Greece's recent collaboration with Israel. The shifting relations between Turkey, Israel and the USA, particularly since the invasion of Iraq in 2003, have presented Greece with renewed opportunity for imperialist pursuits. In the last decade, Israel has been facing increasing geopolitical insecurity, and this has forced it to seek new alliances. In this context, Israel and Greece have been engaging in numerous political exercises, whilst Israel is the

time, made his infamous public announcement that Greece was officially in trouble and would be entering a restructuring programme with the IMF. The announcement was set and publicly broadcasted from the island of Kastelorizo, making a clear statement concerning Greece's sovereign interests. In the former PM's own words: "Kastelorizo is particularly important. It is important to Greece, for everything that we are negotiating in the wider area, the energy reserves, the continental shelf, etc. The fact that Katselorizo has been promoted on an international level should be applauded [...]"

only country that acknowledges Kastelorizo as part of the greek EEZ<sup>29</sup>. At the same time, Greece has taken full advantage of the relationship between Athens and Nicosia (Cyprus), as well as a string of current events that are shifting the status quo of the eastern Mediterranean (ie. mavi marmara, the arab spring, Barbaros' research in Cyprus), in order to strengthen its own status. In an article written by renowned greek fascist F. Kranidiotis entitled "Greece is not the neighbours' goat"<sup>30</sup>, we are given a glimpse into the minds of the greek bourgeoisie and its fascist cronies:

"Now more than ever, it is of paramount importance to use these two weapons- our energy reserves and the new relationship between Greece, Cyprus and Israel, to convince the USA to become the fourth partner in a new geopolitical arrangement in the eastern Mediterranean, which would enhance and upgrade our status. This requires unity, stability and persuasive arguments, as well as an awareness of our importance in the area. We are a European country, a member of the European Union and NATO, a stable democracy, the end point in Israel's life line: Tel Aviv - Nicosia - Athens [...] Let us actively contribute to our alliances, by pointing out our common interests, pursuing them with realism and extracting the maximum possible benefits for Hellenism - from the river Sgubin and Orestiadia to Karpasia."

This is clearly a revival of the Great Idea (*Megáli Idéa*) by greek bosses: to expand Greece's territory from the Sgubin river in Southern Albania, to the Karpas peninsula in Cyprus. In other words, Greece may not be the neighbours' goat, but the neighbours' goat definitely belongs to Greece. As for the supposed existence of new energy reserves, it has become clear (mainly by admittance of various officials working for the regime), that such claims are nothing more than a strategic delusion. A characteristic example, is the professor of Geochemistry at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Panagiotis Mitropoulos, who in 2008, during his lecturing course on 'Mineral raw materials, Organic compounds and Oil', categorically stated:

"There is no petrol within greek territory. Let's be serious. Anyone who states otherwise is a charlatan, not a scientist"<sup>31</sup>.

29 <http://www.defencenet.gr/defence/o/16837>

30 <http://www.dimokratianews.gr/>

31 Reference from a students' testament in Jurassic Research collective magazine, issue 4, 03/14

In 2010, however, after being appointed manager at the Institute of Geology and Mineral Exploration, the same professor drastically changed his tune, and set out to convince us that we were soon to be swimming in oil... The search for energy reserves in Cyprus' territory has also failed, since research in two drilling fields (Amathousa and Onasagoras) has produced no results<sup>32</sup>. Greeces' former prime minister, A. Samaras, spoke of profits reaching 150 bil EURO from oil reserves in Wester Greece, when in the same period the rate of minimum wage had fallen well below the poverty line. On the other hand, when it comes to international pipelines, a few more miles in a countrys' EEZ can make all the difference.

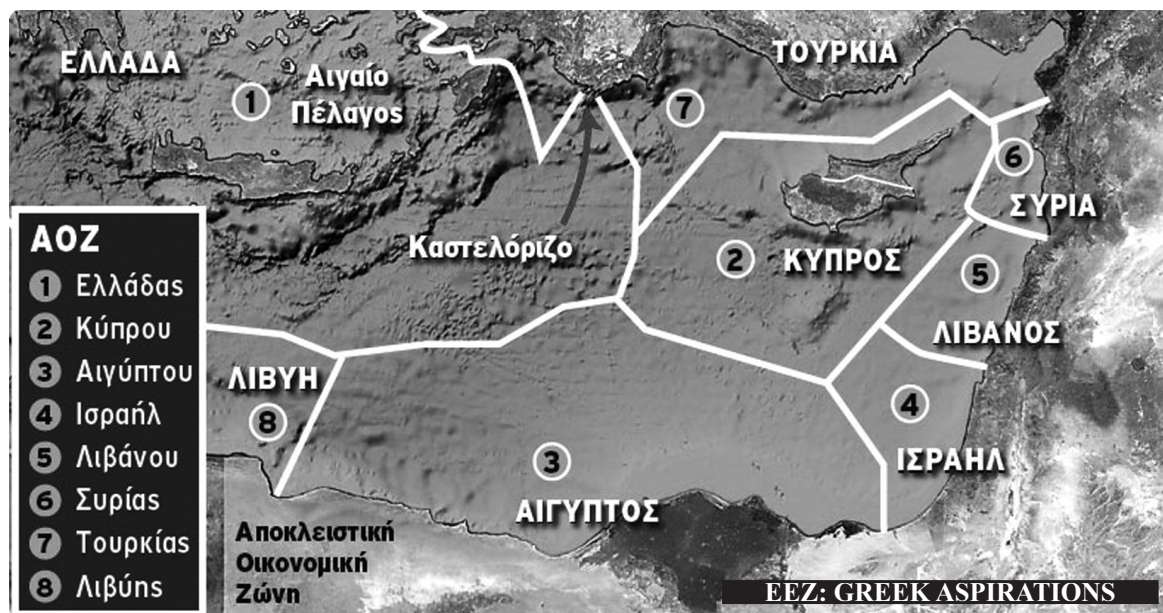
The problem is that greek bosses know all too well, that Kastelorizo is not entitled to the EEZ assigned to it by the greek government. They are also aware that in complicated cases such as the Greek - Turkish coastline, where the distance separating the two countries is much less than 200 nautical miles and the coastline is dotted with hundreds of islands and islets, it is almost certain that there will be need for international mediation. At the same time, countries with similar claims to Greece (as seen in similar disputes, such as Ukraine - Romania, Nicaragua - Colombia and France - Canada), have never won a claim in the International Courts to this day. Therefore, Greece must follow a more indirect route in order to pursue its interests.

Which brings us to the other two geographical points- the island of Gavdos and the Diapontia islands of Corfu (Ereikousa, Mathraki and Othonoi). Greece is aware that its' claim over Kastelorizo is unreasonable and has set out to finalise negotiations with Libya before it negotiates with Turkey. It is therefore attempting to strike a deal with Libya in which Gavdos is recognised as the most southern point of its EEZ. The dispute with Albania follows a similar pattern. In 2009, the greek foreign minister (Mpakogianni), signed a deal with the Albanian prime minister (Berisha) agreeing the EEZ between the two countries. However, the albanian constitutional courts annulled the deal after an appeal by the opposition party. The oppositions' main argument was that the deal favoured Greece. For greek bosses, this was a

[jurassiccollective.wordpress.com](http://jurassiccollective.wordpress.com)

32 <https://left.gr/news/kypros-oyte-kai-stin-amathoysa-entopistikan-ekmetalleysima-koitasmata- fysikoy-aerioy>





golden opportunity to openly state their interests and set a precedent for future negotiations with Turkey. In fact, Greece followed a considerably provocative strategy, and despite the lack of agreement<sup>33</sup>, began conducting research in the marine area. By doing so, it indicated that it is prepared to act unilaterally. This is particularly significant if one considers the importance of a few extra EEZ miles, in determining a country's involvement (or exclusion) from international operations, such as a pipeline through the Adriatic.

Greece's claims over the EEZ are a core part of its foreign policy. We chose to focus on the example of Exclusive Economic Zones because we predict that they will play an increasingly big part in the future of inter-capitalist competition. In Greece's case, the EEZ is a vehicle through which Greek bosses are attempting to expand their borders. The Greek states' aggressive policies go hand in hand with its historical pursuits for territorial expansion. As workers, we have no reason to engage in war with one another over our rulers' interests. We must therefore oppose all efforts from those who try to entrap us within a 'national corpus' and silence us in the name of national interest.

SY.RIZ.A's strategy on foreign policy is clear not only from the little time it's been in government, but throughout the party's political career. We need

only look back at an event organised on 12/02/14 through which the party presented its official positions in relation to the armed forces. Apart from the usual party political figures, the event featured a presentation by K. Grivas, a member of the party's Defense Committee but also a renowned supporter of far-right ideas who teaches defense analysis and geopolitical studies at the Military Academy. K. Grivas' views are in no way 'internationalist' and he has been interviewed by more than one fascist publication (such as Stoxos, Eleftheros Kosmos, Patria)<sup>34</sup>.

With this in mind, we present a number of statements below, by key SY.RIZ.A party officials.

The first one is by the party leader himself, Alexis Tsipras, from a speech he gave in Parliament on 24/01/2011, as reported by the party newspaper, Avgi<sup>35</sup>:

...On the subject of the EEZ, the chairman of SY.RIZ.A's central committee commented that Greece had done nothing about the EEZ of Kastelorizo but instead, left another country to recognise it first!

[a/n: Direct reference to Israel recognising the Greek EEZ of Kastelorizo]

Alexis Tsipras raised five key issues:

- Why is Turkey expanding its territorial waters and defining its EEZ to the Black Sea but Greece



is not doing the same in the Ionian sea?

- Why has Albania annulled the EEZ agreement which it co-signed with Greece? A. Tsipras pointed out that G. Papandreou did not react, did not bring the agreement to parliament, continued to join the chairman of the Albanian socialist party, Edi Rama, in his pre-election campaign (even though he supported the appeal against the agreement), and therefore Albania remains on its path towards EU membership despite having withdrawn from the deal.

- Why are we not progressing in defining the EEZ with Libya which will include Gavdos' rights? "What do you do when you meet with Gaddafi in Tripoli?" he wondered.

- Why are you not following Cyprus' example? Have you not drawn any conclusions from the Cypriot governments' efforts that can be of use to Greek foreign policy? If so, why don't you meet with the Cypriot government to discuss further?

- Why do you not proceed to a balanced force reduction?

Kostas Isihos, Deputy Minister of Defense. In 2013 he was chiefly responsible for SY.RIZ.A positions on foreign policy and defense. An extract from his statement on a left wing blog, on 22/02/2013<sup>36</sup>:

36 <https://aristeriparevasi.wordpress.com/2013/02/24/%CE%B1%CE%BF%CE%B6-%CE%BD%CE%AD%CE%BF%CE%B9-%CE%B5%CE%BD%CE%B5%CF%81%CE%B3%CE%B5%CE%B9%CE%B1%CE%BA%CE%BF%CE%AF-%CE%B4%CF%81%CF%8C%CE%BC%CE%BF%CE%B9-%CE%83%CF%84%CE%B7%CE%BD-%CE%B1%CE%BD%CE%B1%CF%84/>

According to International Law, Turkey does not have an EEZ in this marine area because it is interposed by Kastelorizo. Kastelorizo has both territorial waters and a marine shelf and it therefore has an Exclusive Economic Zone according to International Law, which borders with Egypt and Cyprus (depending on when Athens decides to define its EEZ, following agreement with its neighboring countries). It is also doubtful that the process through the Hague International Court will produce results since the issue of "vicinity" is taken into account (for example in the France - Canada case, although the island of St. Pierre Michelon is French, Canada was given EEZ rights, including all fishing rights<sup>37</sup>).

When it comes to matters of 'national interest', the line separating the left from the right becomes dangerously blurred. Anyone who objects is treated as a pariah and is silenced.

So we must bear the ramblings of SY.RIZ.A's chairman (our current prime minister) about the EEZ of the Ionian sea, which essentially demand that Greece blocks another country's route to the EU. How internationalist of him! Similarly, the Deputy Minister of Defense informs us that Turkey has not got an EEZ but at the same time we should not rely on the International Courts because we will lose the case!

37 Despite the fact that the group of islands owned by France amount to a surface area of 210 m2, France tried to claim an EEZ of 50,000m2 around the islands, within Canada's waters! It obviously lost the case...



"The greek commercial fleet is worth the most, valued at 106 bill dollars according to VesselsValue.com, and represents 19% of the globes' tankers [...] Greek shipowners control 23% of the global bulk carrier fleet, even though their country represents less than 0,4% of the global economy"

bloomberg.com, 09/03/2015

We wonder: when the greek fleet exits the Suez Canal, in what sea would travel? Greek sea or Turkish sea? Who will take care about this issue?

It is obvious that SY.RIZ.A is not only completely faithful to the greek states' age-old imperialist ambitions, but it is set on maintaining and building the nationalist sentiment. It provokes Turkey by sending the defense Minister to through commemoration wreaths over the islet of Imia<sup>38</sup>, a hugely disputed area on the border between Turkey and Greece, in the Aegean sea. It proposes the creation of a NATO military base in the border island of Karpathos. It continues liaising with Israel and the Egyptian junta. It sends its' MPs to support nationalist events in the northern border area of Greece and it declares the further militarisation of the Greek-Albanian border.

This is what the Left means by peace and international friendship. Or to put it plainly, they are all too happy to promote anti-imperialism as long as we're not talking about their own territory. The time has come for all those who hoped SY.RIZ.A would act as an internationalist or antifascist force, to overcome their delusions. The antimilitarist movement gained nothing from SY.RIZ.A's rise to power. There is still no organised class struggle, no internationalism, no grassroots antimilitarist organising. And there is not one political party that would not be prepared to use us as cannon fodder in the battlefields of inter-capitalist competition.✊

## Our Objections, their demise.

The above arguments serve to expose the inseparable and timeless relationship of the state with national unity, militarism and expansionism. Even with a left wing leadership,

that our class enemies must make these three steps if they are to succeed in the arena of inter-capitalist competition. If they are to win in the battlefield.

We know all too well that inter-capitalist competition has nothing to do with our own interests. As organised antimilitarists, we must not only expose the geopolitical schemes and actions of our class enemies. Instead we must take things a step further by openly confronting those schemes and actions in an attempt to avert any military operations.

The first necessary step towards is to become total objectors to military service. Let no body or mind, not one dime and not one hour of our time be given to serve the interests of our class enemies. It is our duty to deny the war machine the fuel it needs to operate. Conscription must fail in attracting the numbers that army chiefs dream of, so that it becomes clear that they must fight in their own wars. We carry the weight of our choices both collectively and publicly, in order to encourage others to do the same. We promote our message to our class brothers and sisters in every corner of the earth, we organise and we collaborate.

**We organise the War against War  
Our collective objections will lead  
to the demise of our class enemies.**

**NOT A SINGLE  
MINUTE IN THE ARMY**  
solidarity to total  
objectors of  
military service

Xupoluto Tagma/Barefoot Battalion is group from Ioannina, Greece, <http://xupolutotagma.squat.gr>



**STATE AND CAPITALISM:  
KEEPING YOU IN DANGER  
DURING WAR AND PEACE.**

<sup>38</sup> The islet of Imia or Kardak was the object of a military crisis and subsequent dispute over sovereignty between Greece and Turkey in 1996. During the crisis three greek air force officers died in a helicopter crash over the islet.



# Anti-militarism in Serbia in the 1990s

Igor Seke is a peace activist from Serbia, currently living in Mexico. From year 2001-2004 he was coordinating the Conscientious Objection campaign in Serbia, together with other Campaign members, mainly coming from the punk and underground music and art scene. Currently, he's participating in various initiatives in favor of the rights of the indigenous communities in Mexico. He's a council member of War Resisters' International (WRI) and also an active member of the Antimilitarist Network of the Latin America and the Caribbean (RAMALC).

**Antipolitika:** Tell us something about the general characteristics of the anti-war movement of the 90s in Serbia.

**Igor Seke:** The anti-war movement had many forms. For example, the Civil Alliance of Serbia was a political party that participated in the elections and had clear anti-nationalist and anti-war characteristics, and many intellectuals of the left and social-democratic orientation were members or sympathizers of that movement. In addition to that, in the beginning of the war, a group of rock musicians gathered and made the song "Slušaj 'vamo" ("Listen here") that called for people to boycott the war and calls for mobilization. *Women in Black Against the War* was also founded, and they openly helped the deserters and conscientious objectors, and they were—in the literal sense—the cradle of the conscientious objection movement in Serbia. *Women in Black* became members of the global anti-militarist network War Resister's International (WRI) and through an international network made contact with conscientious objectors movement from Spain (MOC) from which we learned a lot. YUCOM, the committee of lawyers for human rights also joined the struggle for the recognition of the right to conscientious objection, and in cooperation with them a campaign for the collection of 30.000 signatures for a citizens initiative for the recognition of the right to conscientious objection was started. The initiative was rejected by the parliament, but it was the first indicator

that things would change.

Later, the Balkan office for the European Bureau for Conscientious Objection (EBCO Balkan) was opened. EBCO used contacts in the Council of Europe and other institutions to put pressure on the government, so that the right to conscientious objection would be recognized. An alliance with the Student union was also formed and they also joined the campaign actively along with youth sections of small political parties—usually of Social-Democratic orientation (to be honest, I'm not sure if they exist today...)

The connection between anti-militarism and feminism was strong in Serbia, but as far as the workers movement is concerned, unfortunately the working class was probably the most conservative part of the society, and voted for authoritarian and nationalist political parties. The movement became more massive when it was clear that the right to conscientious objection would be recognized. People with more diverse backgrounds were joining with one goal: to evade military service. The first "contingent" of conscientious objectors consisted of 220 people, out of 10.000 recruits that were called every year. By 2006, the number of conscientious objectors reached almost 50%. But as I said, after the recognition of the right to conscientious objection, the movement practically vanished and anti-militarism returned to the area of organizations that had promoted it since the beginning of the war: *Women in Black*.

The movement, therefore, had two



Student anti-war protest, Terazijka česma, Belgrade, 1991

components: One was more institutional and sought the recognition of the right to conscientious objection from the government—The second was alternative, and pretty much underground. For example, we did a CD compilation of various punk bands that was accompanied with the booklet about anti-militarism called "I Refuse to Kill". There were also tours of alternative bands across Serbia and anti-militarist materials were spread. Punk bands, starting with *Hoću? Neću!* (an anarchist band from Kraljevo - Antipolitika), were in the core of that anti-militarist and anti-nationalist struggle in Serbia during the 90s.

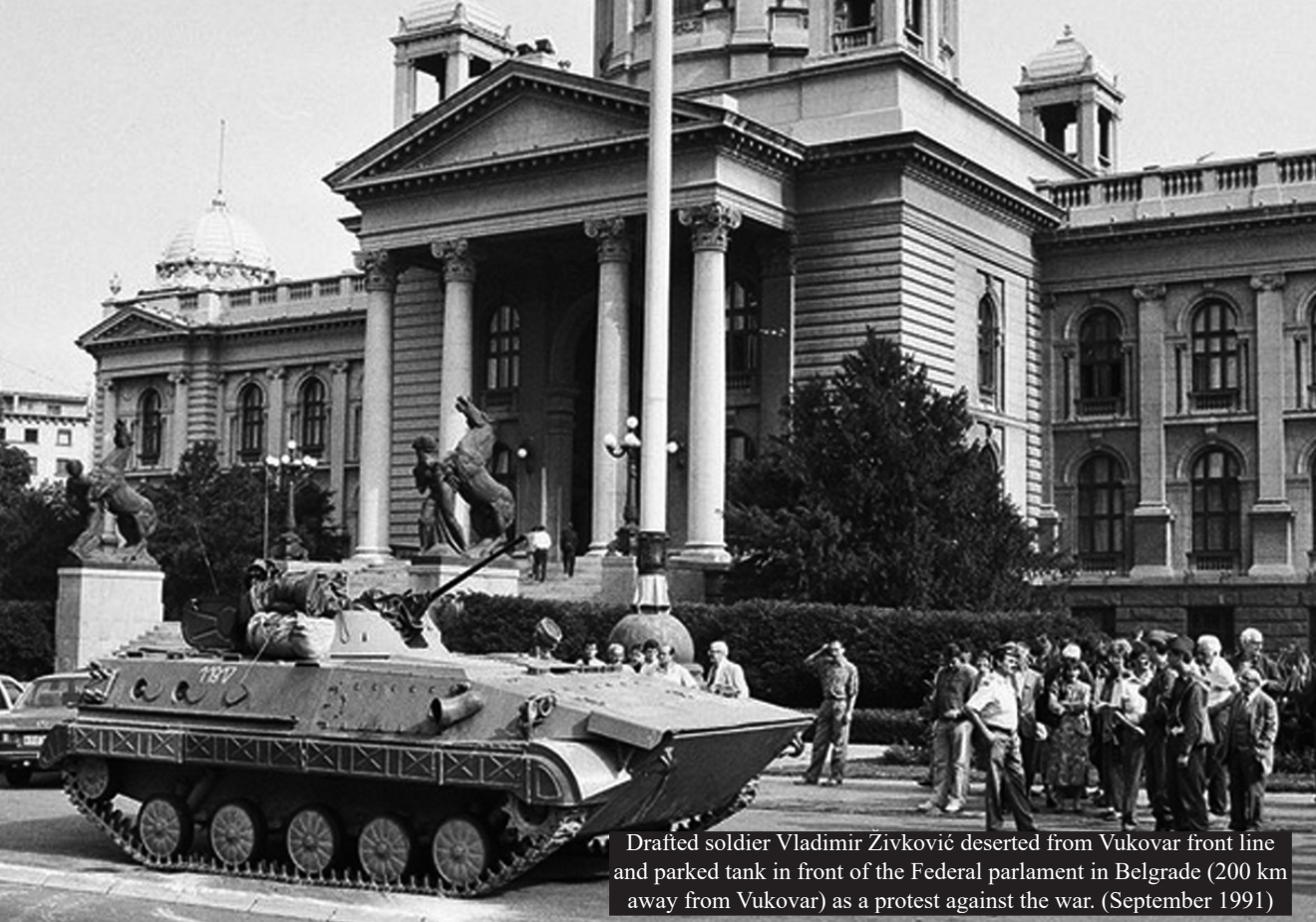
**Antipolitika:** In what way were you active in the movement?

**Igor Seke:** At first, I was active in the movement for the conscientious objection with *Women in Black*, where we made the magazine "Prigovor" (Objection), and then I coordinated the campaign initiated by EBCO Balkan. At the same time, with Sićko from Kraljevo and Mačak from Smederevska Palanka, I organized alternative concerts, made CD compilations and so on.

Later I coordinated actions with EBCO

and with WRI that also had good connections with Amnesty International, which was of great help when I refused to do my military service. In 2002. I wrote a letter to the military in which I stated that I have a conscientious objection to the military service that comes from my philosophical stance and that under no circumstances will I do military service. They refused my letter, and I decided to go to the barracks and there refuse to serve again, which I did. Thanks to the campaign that was started by WRI, Amnesty and EBCO from abroad, and *Women in Black* inside the country, my case was the first time we succeeded in releasing someone from military service on—what we could call—philosophical-political grounds. The army, of course, wouldn't admit defeat, so they released me of service with the diagnosis "person that cannot adapt to the military regime of life", but they told me on my way out of the barracks "we let you go, but now stop being involved with conscientious objection." Of course, I did not stop being involved with this topic and, because the case was present in the media, immediately after I left the barracks several other conscientious objectors also openly refused military service, mostly out of religious reasons, although soon





Drafted soldier Vladimir Živković deserted from Vukovar front line and parked tank in front of the Federal parliament in Belgrade (200 km away from Vukovar) as a protest against the war. (September 1991)

people appeared who refused it out of reason of free conscience.

**Antipolitika: Can you describe what did it mean, in Serbia, especially in the time of war, to refuse military service? Of course, not only how the state reacted, but also the society?**

**Igor Seke:** Serbia in the 90s was a country in which there existed an extremely strong emphasis on uniformity: Serbian ethnic identity (Serbhood) and Orthodox Christianity. The promoters of this idea had two key resources in their hands: propaganda and force. Even the ones who were not affected by the propaganda felt forced, at least as far the military service is concerned, as with everyone else, to serve in the military. The idea that “the only way to get rid of military service is to go through with it” was all present, even amongst many who were involved or sympathized with the conscientious objectors movement! Of course, there were political dissidents who resisted the Milošević regime, but amongst them also there was a very strong nationalist element (some of them even

had their own para-military units) – therefore the issue of obligatory military service was not raised by any of the influential political or social players. Open refusal of military service was the same as treason and meant, on the social level, self-expulsion from the body of the nation - the state, in a fact, considered you as someone who was working for the enemy. Those who already did their military service, even if it was against their will, were very often against avoidance or the refusal of the military service after returning from service because: “if I had to go, so do you.” So it is obvious that the military service was very traumatic for everyone.

Besides this, the state apparatus was convinced that the propaganda was functioning perfectly, so the army was always repeating that only 0.04% recruits wanted to serve without arms and that they were always members of “religious cults.” In smaller places, logically, social pressure was greater than in, for example, Belgrade or Novi Sad. Many members or sympathizers of the anti-war movement went to do their military service and there they simulated

mental or physical illness so they would be let go. Returning home from the army as a result of some “mental problem” marked the person in a much more drastic way in smaller places than in the bigger ones. A large number of volunteers left to the front in Croatia and Bosnia from these smaller places, and after they returned to Serbia they had the freedom to harass who they wanted to. In most cases, the police was not doing anything to stop them—even though most of them were also doing criminal activities (racketeering, kidnappings, blackmailing, and even murder), because they were “Serbian heroes.” If someone was determined to not do their military service, they needed to find a way to not do it in an overtly open way so that they wouldn’t provoke those “Serbian patriots” who were above the authorities. The beginning of the war in Kosovo resulted in a mass mobilization and only then were there signs of the consciousness that the war is not something that is happening “somewhere else” started to develop. So there were even protests of women in central Serbia who demanded that their husbands be demobilized and sent home. After the end of the war and the fall of the Milošević regime, Serbian society slowly started to accept the idea the the Serbian man doesn’t always “happily join the army”, although the state, and primarily the military, still did not accept that idea, and it still doesn’t, because they are all the time trying to impose the idea that obligatory military service should somehow be reinstated.

**Antipolitika: How would you describe the role of the deserters in the society?**

**Igor Seke:** The army thinks that every conscientious objector is one soldier less in their formation. Everyone who decides not to be a soldier in the practical sense for them is a deserter. In Serbia the word “deserter” is most often connected to the word “coward”. But, much more courage is needed to confront the state and military machine than to bow your head down and do what you are told. Personally, I do not glorify heroism, nor do I underestimate cowardice. In fact, if during the wars in former Yugoslavia, people were more courageous to openly say that they were cowards, and if they

listened to themselves and deserted, many lives would have been saved. But, because everyone knows that the deserters in war are often treated more cruelly than the enemy is, many do not dare to desert.

The role of the deserters in a society at war is minimal, because they are then in a situation in which they need to hide and therefore they can’t influence the society from within. The role of conscientious objectors, anti-militarists and pacifists is of great importance in moments when the war propaganda is starting and when it is obvious that the ultimate goal is to get the support of the society to start a war.

Although, we cannot say, that the global anti-war campaigns were very successful until now, it doesn’t mean that they wont be one day. The nationalist element, even amongst the people who are generally against the wars, plays an important role. In 2003 when the war in Iraq was getting started I was in London, and I remember how the anti-war discourse of some of the mainstream media changed in one day from “oppose the war” to “support the troops,” because, when we are already in war it is “logical” that we support our troops. Those media outlets did not call the soldiers to desert from the war that they opposed themselves a few days earlier. War, therefore, narrows all logic to a binary one: us or them, while the deserters, for what ever reason, refuse to accept that logic. If they are politically active they will try, no matter where they are, even in some third country, to destroy that binary logic, and if not, they will at least try to save their own life or the lives of those they would be forced to kill if they didn’t desert. We have seen in the recent years what happens to different “whistle-blowers” who are treated as deserters and the biggest traitors only because they tried to destroy the black and white picture of the war that is served to us by the governments.

**Antipolitika: In your opinion, what are some of the more important aspects of anti-militarism from that period and in what way is this relevant today?**

**Igor Seke:** For me, a very important aspect was that the anti-militarist and anti-war movement



was an inclusive movement—not an exclusive one—and that all kinds of individuals joined it. Secondly, it was a non-hierarchical movement, which doesn't mean it didn't have a structure or organization.

The anti-militarist movement showed in practice that the state is more often an obstacle to building normal inter-personal relations, than it is a frame for it. The existence of Yugoslavia, or Serbia, or Croatia, or any other state is not necessary in order for people to work together on something they consider important.

Besides that, a concrete success was that a few times an amnesty for deserters was declared and enabled thousands of people to return home, and also the most important reason that gathered us was realized – the recognition of the right to conscientious objection. We mustn't forget that the obligatory military service was not abolished but only suspended, which is the case in most other states. Nevertheless, what we managed to win over was that the right to conscientious objection was to be recognized for recruits as well as for the reserve, which should, in practice, mean that in the case of a new war you should be able to “legally desert.” But, in the first place I hope there won't be a new war and who knows how this will actually play out in practice.

Because we had contacts with anti-militarist groups from other countries that shared their experiences with us, we knew that the right to conscientious objection would be a lever that would bring about the breakdown of the obligatory military service, which is in fact is what happened in 2010. As militarism is strongly connected to nationalism, so is anti-militarism strongly connected to anti-nationalism. All arguments that the anti-war movement used in the 90s were shown to be correct, and many of these arguments have been adopted as their own by many of the at-the-time nationalists and war-mongers who are today very much “pro-European”. I may be mistaken, but I believe that today it would be much harder to start a new war than was the case in the beginning of the 90s—which is probably the greatest accomplishment of the anti-militarist movement.

**demilitarization of the society after the end of the last wars in the Balkans? States and politicians talk a lot about the politics of rapprochement and creating new bonds, but to what extent is the society really demilitarized and not in preparation for new conflicts?**

**Igor Seke:** I see nationalism as the cheapest form of entertainment for the poor, and the saying that states that “only a fool trips over the same stone twice,” obviously doesn't apply in our area. No matter how many times nationalism been pulled out as a method of distraction from the important issues, every time this trick has worked, which speaks a lot about the authoritarian political culture in the south Slavic countries. Serbia is now openly bragging how its military industry is back on its feet and how the export of weapons will grow each year. On the other hand, news that the massacre in Paris was committed with Kalashnikovs produced in Kragujevac was quickly buried. The government is continuously saying how Serbia cannot allow itself a new war, not because they became pacifists or anti-militarists, but because they know that they would lose it quickly.

Demilitarization was done only partially, in the sense of limiting the size and the strength of the military, in Serbia and also in Croatia, Bosnia, etc., but there is no demilitarization of education, social relations or politics. Personally I don't believe that Serbia could enter a new conflict in the near future because it is aware of its weakness. However, nationalist militarism is kept on standby and can be turned on quickly in accordance with the needs of the ones who are in power or their superiors, internal entities (local tycoons), or those from abroad. How much of an effect it would have depends on how much all of us learned from our mistakes in the 90s.

**Antipolitika:** When you say that anti-militarism is inseparable from anti-nationalism, does that mean that the struggle against nationalism and militarism starts with the struggle against the state and its “owner” capital?

**Igor Seke:** Of course. The influence of the

common people on the political decisions in any state is minimal, and that includes the states that like to call themselves “developed democracies.” That which is proclaimed to be in the “interest of the state” is in reality always the interest of the economic elite. That so-called elite is only interested in power and money, and for money will do anything: cut down the forests; pollute the soil, rivers and air; lie to and sell ordinary people worthless bank and state papers— and also kill activists, journalists, its critics... Besides that, any state will gladly send it's troops to protect the interests of corporations not only in capitalist, but also in quasi-socialist states like Ecuador or Venezuela, even Bolivia. That says to us that capital owns all states, and therefore also the repressive apparatus of all states— that is, the army and the police. It also says that nationalism and different kinds of state ideologies are only smoke screens that are trying to hide the fact that the current economical mode leads everyone to greater inequality and, in its final result, to the destruction of the planet.

**Antipolitika:** New wave of militarization in Europe clearly indicates the long term plans and a creation of a kind of a “military frontier” towards the East, but also inside

Europe it self, through building fences, placing the military to the borders and so on. What is your view of that?

**Igor Seke:** Humankind lives on all of the continents, and people have adapted to the desert of Sahara, and to the ice of Greenland and to the jungles of Brazil. That is the result of human migration and their ability to adapt. So, throughout the entirety of history there have been migrations, and it is completely crazy to think that they will stop. On the other hand, NATO is nothing else but an iron fist of capitalism. This militaristic monster exists only for one purpose: securing the status quo in the relations of the East and the West, the North and the South. Europe has never given up its colonial politics, and therefore it has not considered abolishing NATO. But even if relations were reorganized, if more just geographical relations were set up, people would still continue to migrate. For example, now in 2016. there is a far greater number of Spaniards who migrate to Latin America than the number of Latin Americans who go to Spain. Does this mean that the Latin American states should intercept the airplanes that carry European migrants? Europe, or the “West” in general, unfortunately for all of us, is not aware that their way of life is financed by





the exploitation of billions of people on other continents.

**Antipolitika: Which areas of struggle do you see as the key ones for anti-militarist and anti-nationalist movements?**

**Igor Seke:** The fact is that while there was obligatory military service the anti-militarist movement was much bigger, because the central issue it posed was affecting the whole male population. With the suspension of military service, the anti-militarist movement was, in effect, decimated, and that happened in our area as well as in other parts of Europe and beyond. But, militarism continued to expand and, in connection to what I said earlier, it now occupies greater territories, an obvious example being Latin America where armies are doing the dirty jobs for corporations or even worse: run criminal business keeping their own people in continuous fear of repression.

Therefore, the struggle against militarization of territories and the presence of military units where they don't belong, is a very important element of the anti-militarist struggle. On the other hand we should not forget that armies receive money from state budgets, and that paradoxically we finance that repression ourselves. Conscientious objection to military expenses, that is, the refusal to pay the part of the taxes which would be used for military purposes is a form of anti-militarist activism that is becoming more and more stronger. European organizations have started a campaign called "War starts here," with the goal of explaining to Europeans that the wars in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, are started with plans made in Europe. Also, I'm personally impressed by non-violent movements for autonomy by many indigenous (so called "Indian") communities, that at the same time refuse the state imposition of the political system as well of the presence of repressive forces like the army or the police. More and more communities are working on autonomy and political self-management without the idea of creating some new state or anything similar to that. For instance, the Cheran community in Mexico is a great example of this, and I believe that the anti-militarist and anti-

nationalist movements can learn a lot from these indigenous communities.

**Antipolitika: Despite the fact that deserters during the war were forced to hide, the mere fact that they were very big percentage of the population was an important political message. On the other hand, this was not talked about in Croatia at all – neither about how many deserters there are in Serbia and that not everyone there is supporting the war, nor about how many deserters there were on the Croatian side. Both things were potentially detrimental for the war efforts.**

**Igor Seke:** Those who were in hiding couldn't be very loud. On the other hand, the Milošević regime was happy that many were leaving the country, because with that there were fewer enemies of the regime inside the country. People spread throughout the whole world and there was no strong diaspora created that could be connected around a political goal of ending the regime. I will now perhaps generalize a little bit, but it seems to me that whoever escaped the mental institution called "Serbia during the 1990s" didn't have a lot of will to deal with the regime change from abroad, so the fact that half a million people left— or a million—the exact number is not known, didn't carry with itself any clear political message. On the contrary, it served the regime.

Of course, in Croatia they did not speak about the number of people from Serbia who refused the war, because they had to create a picture of "Serbo-Chetnick" aggressors. In Japan, commercials on TV are always played twice in a row so the message of the commercial would be recorded in the conscious and subconscious. Imagine what kind of consciousness or subconsciousness was created on Serbian and Croatian television that were played, not twice, but 100 time per day nonstop, repeating the propaganda about "Serbo-Chetnick aggressors" and "wild Ustasha hordes." In war and war propaganda you need to confine the other to an inferior level, as if you are not dealing with people. Because if one can see the humanity in someone else, they will not kill them just because someone ordered them to do it.✶

Statement of participants of the 8th Balkan Anarchist Bookfair, Mostar, September 2014

# Over the walls of nationalism and war

It is clear that nationalism is a tool used against the exploited classes. In the Balkans, (especially in the region of ex-Yugoslavia) the rise of nationalist ideology in the 1990's helped enable the brutal capitalist attack against society. It further atomized the population and destroyed established networks of cooperation and solidarity.

The need to confront nationalist ideology from a radical and anti-authoritarian perspective gathered us in Mostar on the 5th and 6th of September 2014, for the 8th Balkan Anarchist Bookfair. We came from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, Slovenia, Albania, Romania, Greece and other countries outside the Balkan area.

The true nature of nationalism is nowhere more obvious than in Mostar, a city divided in two, with the signs of wartime brutality still evident in the streets of the city.

It is essential to realize that this division was not the cause of war, but the consequence of wars and nationalist ideologies created by the ruling class.

This was clear to the demonstrators in Tuzla who wrote the graffiti "Death to nationalism" as

well as to demonstrators in Mostar who burned down the headquarters of both nationalist parties in February.

Still, in other parts of the world new nationalisms and conflicts are being created on similar lines and with predictable consequences.

Many in the Ukraine today think they have to respond to the false choices of war posed by states and corporations (amongst them are even some anarchists and "anarchists"). We, however, maintain that nationalism is always an ideology that reproduces the State, a system of repression and exploitation, and pits the exploited and oppressed against one another. Today we see in the Ukraine the same mechanism that was used also in the war(s) in former Yugoslavia: Nationalism is the tool of those in power to push people into war for the interests of capital. As anarchists, we opposed all war efforts in former Yugoslavia through solidarity that continues to this day. Far from liberal pacifism or obsessions with left-nationalist guerrilla armies, our struggle will never take the side of militarist politics and the destruction that all states are based on.✶

Against nationalism, militarism and war! Against all governments and states! For solidarity and autonomy!

